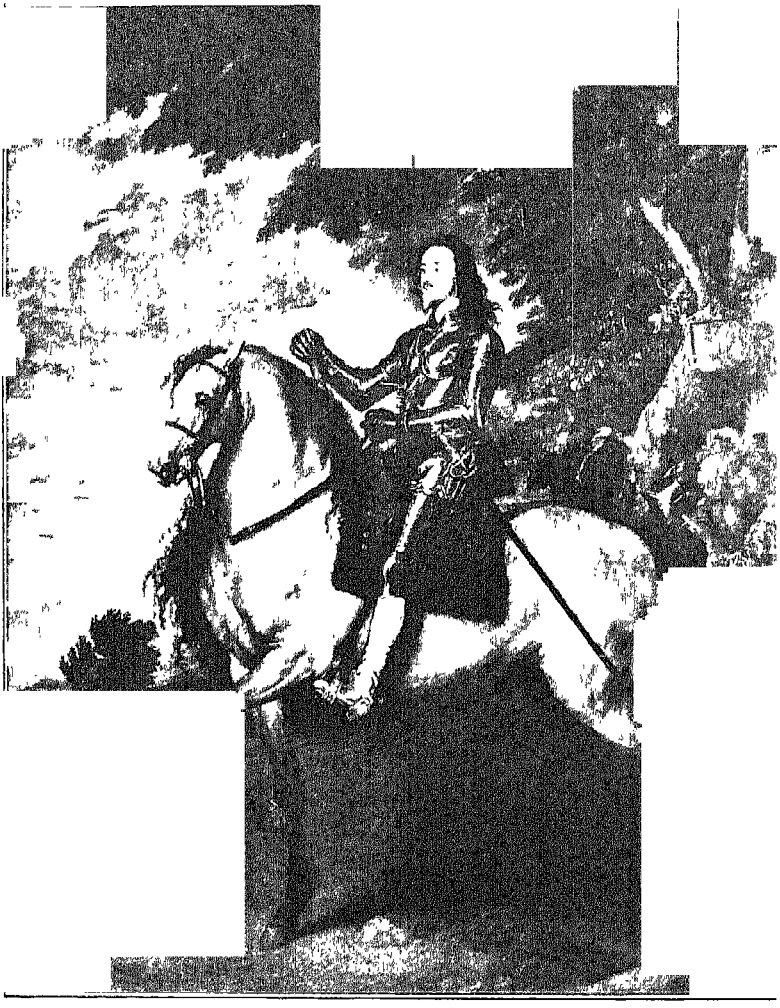


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CHARLES I



CHARLES I

(After Van Dyck)

CHARLES I

A STUDY

By

F. M. G. HIGHAM



LONDON
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TO MY

FATHER AND MOTHER

CHAPTER I

PRINCE CHARLES

"Wax to receive and Marble to retain."

CHARLES STUART, younger son of King James VI of Scotland and his Danish wife, was born in Dunfermline on November 19th, 1600. He was their youngest surviving child; the little sisters born after James' accession to the English throne died in infancy. Charles, too, was a sickly child who was not expected to live. His anxious parents surrounded him with doctors and nurses and spared neither trouble nor expense that he might survive. That his frail body might not be tired by the comings and goings of court life, his babyhood was spent undisturbed in Dunfermline, while at Edinburgh King James expatiated on the divinity of kings, and in London a lonely old Queen, whose spirit had never yet been broken, fought a losing battle with unconquerable death.

The visitor to Dunfermline to-day may wander through the lovely glen where the castle once stood that housed the baby prince. Beyond lies a glorious expanse of country stretching to the distant hills, while the ruins of the old abbey, high above the glen, dominate the whole scene. The power of a living faith breathes through the grandeur of the stones, magnificent even in decay. As the child-mind gradually unfolded in the first few impressionable years of life, it must have been the great tower of Dunfermline Abbey which overshadowed all the rest of Charles' material world.

He was a lonely child. When in November 1603, Queen Elizabeth died and King James rode south in triumph to receive the crown of England, the children were left behind. Henry, the elder son, a gallant lad of

twelve, and Princess Elizabeth, the winsome little maid whom all adored, soon followed their parents, never to return to Scotland. But Charles remained at Dunfermline, still denied the companionship of elder children to tease him out of shyness and to coax him to venture forth into their larger world.

In April 1604, however, a certain Dr. Atkins, accompanied by Edward Philips, "apothecary," was sent from London to attend the Prince on his journey south, and in July the doctor declared his patient well enough to travel. With the utmost precautions the journey was begun, and the King and Queen set out to meet their son at Northampton. One can imagine the stir and excitement as the royal cavalcade swept through the narrow streets, the heralds and the coaches and the prancing horses, the soldiers of the guard and the lords and ladies in attendance. The King himself was prominent, with his ungainly figure and his shrewd Scots countenance marred by an ugly mouth. When he spoke, his Scottish brogue made him difficult to understand. Yet he had a kindly manner which was less than could be said of the courtiers who attended him, men and women with tight lips and tired eyes, gamblers who as yet were unsuccessful in the game of chance and intrigue called "life at court." When James had come to England, the year before, the division of spoils had left them dissatisfied, and now they staked much on a last chance, a post in the household of the King's second son.

So one watches, in fancy, the Prince and his retinue riding in to the courtyard of the Northampton hostelry where the King and Queen awaited them. The litter was closed, and there was no sign of the child within. The crowds must content themselves, perforce, with a glimpse of Dr. Atkins, the physician, in anxious attendance that his difficult task might be brought to a happy close. For he did not like his charge to be excited: there would probably be a sleepless night ahead, and

perhaps a touch of fever. He shook his head as the crowd broke into cheers, and not till they were safely within the courtyard of the inn, did he allow the curtains of the litter to be withdrawn, that little Prince Charles might be lifted out to salute his father.

The courtiers pressed forward to watch. They were disappointed. They saw a sickly child who could not walk by himself, and put out his hand for support. James took his son up in his arms and kissed him, asking him how he fared, and the child tried to reply. But he stumbled sadly, stammered a few baby words, ill-pronounced, and hung his head in silence. There must be something wrong with his tongue, as well as his feet! The ladies of the court shook their heads. They had each hoped, in bitter rivalry, to become the child's governess; now they were inclined to agree that little of comfort, and less of glory, would be found in Prince Charles' service. He was obviously a backward child. He would probably die young; the ill-humours of the town, a breath of smallpox or a natural ailment of childhood, one or other would be fatal to him, and they for their part would have naught to do with it! Even if he survived, he would be a weakling, always overshadowed by his brother, Prince Henry. The ladies turned away with a shrug of the shoulders.

Two women looked at the child with different eyes. One was Queen Anne, who saw him through tears of joy, for he was her favourite child, bound to her by his very weakness. The other was Elizabeth, Lady Carey, a woman of character and determination. A year before, her husband had ridden north with the news of Queen Elizabeth's death, escaping the vigilance of the Privy Council and pressing forward by day and night till he came to Holyrood and told the news to James. But the latter's gratitude had not stood the strain of the ill-feeling Carey found awaiting him in England. Lady Carey was determined to repair their fortunes, and she

was not to be deterred by so small a thing as a child's ill health. Perhaps, too, she was more of a judge of character than most women. She noted other things than the boy's weak limbs. She watched the sensitive Stuart hands and was touched by the depth of feeling in the dark eyes. She may have liked him none the worse for a hint of obstinacy in his shamefaced silence. "I might make something of him," she thought, "and I will!"

. . . . .

So much is fancy. The facts that time has left to us are few. Lady Carey had her opportunity, for James gave her the post she desired, and as the Prince's governess she ruled his destiny for the next seven years. There were pitched battles with the King who was at once irritated and genuinely grieved by his child's weakness. He suggested that Charles' stuttering speech might be improved if the string under his tongue were slit, and wished to put him into iron boots to strengthen his weak ankles. Lady Carey was obdurate and she told James plainly what she thought of him. The divine right of kings was helpless before a woman's temper, and Charles' nervous system was saved from the well-meaning efforts of over-anxious parents. Instead, Lady Carey concentrated on the improvement of his general health, and her constant care was rewarded. The milder southern climate suited the Prince's constitution and a quiet but happy life at Greenwich, or Nonesuch, or other of the King's country houses, did more than any surgery or medicines to give him that confidence which had been his greatest need.

Living thus in seclusion, he was affected little by the ebb and flow of politics and society and the records are for the most part silent concerning Charles' childhood. The men who conceived the ill-fated Gunpowder Plot passed over the idea of seizing the Prince's person, so difficult would it be to reach his sheltered household,

and planned instead to capture his sister Elizabeth in the west of England and to make her Queen. But two months later young Charles emerged for a glorious few days from obscurity. He came up to Whitehall for the New Year festivities of 1605–6 and was himself the hero of the occasion. The news-writers of the day record with enthusiasm how "Little Charles" was made "Great Duke of York;" how, decked in costly ornaments, he was carried by nine earls into the old banqueting-hall where the ceremony was performed. Next day a great feast was held, a special table being set aside for the nine earls and the little Duke. It is to be hoped that Lady Carey's eye was upon her charge, so that he did not feed too richly for a five-year-old. It must have been a very tired little boy, almost sick with excitement, who went to bed that night, but Charles still talked with difficulty, so he said little and the news-writers had no anecdotes of his behaviour with which to regale their clients. Instead, they described with gusto the masque that was held in the evening, telling of the indiscretion of the Queen and her ladies who bared and blackened their arms and dressed themselves as "blackamoors," a "very loathsome" sight and one not seemly for certain foreign guests to witness. It was on the whole an unpleasant occasion for there was considerable congestion, and when the "whitestaves," or stewards, attempted to enforce order, many luckless or imprudent ladies and gentlemen of the court found themselves locked up in passages and "betwixt doors." When the performance was ended, and the crowded audience hurried out, a banquet prepared for the King in the great chamber was disarranged and the table overturned, while many jewels and purses were lost or stolen.

But Charles, if he were not troubled with nightmares, knew nothing of these blemishes. No doubt the unique occasion remained a golden memory. His life resumed

its normal quiet course. It was not, however, without dignity or kingly trappings. His little court was estimated to cost two hundred pounds a month. Six hundred pounds a year was allotted for "linen and apparel" and fifty pounds as pocket-money for expenditure on gifts. He had his own household officials and a household diet. Many a child would have grown arrogant if his debility had not been increased by spoiling and cosseting, but the atmosphere of royal dignity seems to have benefited Charles. It may be that an increased sense of his own importance helped him to make the necessary effort to overcome his weakness. Certainly, these formalities pleased him, and a love of decorum and seemly ceremonies remained with him all his life.

Another influence was also at work which encouraged him to struggle against his physical disabilities. The dominating emotion of his childhood was his love for his sister Elizabeth. She was a high-spirited girl, who had inherited much of the vivid charm of her paternal grandmother, Mary, Queen of Scots, tempered by a gentleness that she owed perhaps to her mother's Danish forbears. Everybody loved her and they were happy days for Charles when she was with him, though she came less frequently as she grew into an important personage, the King's marriageable daughter, a useful pawn in diplomatic intrigue. Charles, still silent and abashed in company, envied her quick wit and pleasant manners, and was grateful for her friendly affection, eagerly joining when possible in her pursuits and enthusiasms.

The chief of the enthusiasms was her unbounded devotion to her brother, the Prince of Wales. To her, he signified perfection. Gallant and self-assured, with a fair share of Stuart obstinacy beneath his charming manners, Henry was the very pattern of what a prince should be. Charles admired, and imitated. He practised

horsemanship and physical exercises, till he could "make war on the King's deer" like his brother, and dance in the masques at Christmas time.

In November 1610, John Webb "Master of the Tennis Play," was paid twenty pounds for teaching the Duke of York to play tennis. When she handed over her charge at the age of eleven, Lady Carey had reason to feel that she had worked marvels. Physically the boy had improved out of all knowledge, and it was not likely to worry her that Charles had failed to learn a similar self-reliance in things of the mind, and depended instead on silence to hide his slowness of thought.

If Queen Anne had been a less frivolous woman, she might have helped her son. She was often with him at Greenwich, and in loving him she gave him his birthright. But she could not do more. Her mind was too shallow and she herself too preoccupied, either with her approaching confinements and their sad endings, or with the acting and dancing in which she found solace. Had she been able to break down the boy's growing habit of reserve and to share his ambitions, she might have eradicated a sense of inferiority which still lingered, and which the brilliance of Henry and Elizabeth tended to deepen by very constrast.

There is a story of these days that they used to tell in later years when Charles was King. One day, it was said, the two princes were waiting in the entrance-chamber while their father was closeted with the archbishop. Henry, in jest, seized the archbishop's hat and placed it on his brother's head. "I will be King one day," he cried, "and you shall be archbishop, for then you will have a long gown to hide your legs." "Which," says the chronicle, "the child took in such disdain that he threw the cap upon the ground and trampled it under his feet, not being without much difficulty and some force taken off from that eagerness."

On the whole, the story is more characteristic of

Henry than of Charles, who learnt increasingly to hide his feelings under a cloak of silence, a habit that came the more easily to him since he never attained facility of speech. Henry on the other hand had no doubts and few reserves. At times he angered his father, and even annoyed his devoted mother by the vigour with which he criticized the King's policy or the Queen's way of life. But he was saved from being a prig by his zest for life and his skill as a sportsman, qualities which warmed into love the admiration that his political principles had evoked. There was in him an irresistible combination of physical fitness and mental zeal. The London crowds idolized him.

Then, in the autumn of 1612, it was rumoured that Prince Henry was sick. For some weeks he had been depressed, in itself enough to cause alarm. His physicians urged him to be careful, but ignoring their advice he tried to rid himself of his "malaise" by excessive activity. It was at Havering in Essex, where one of his country homes was situated, that he caught a chill, when overheated from a game of tennis, and next day he was in a fever. Soon he was seriously ill. For six agitated days England waited. It was inconceivable that he should die—and yet—! Eminent physicians took counsel together, disagreed and tried various cures; the wretched prince was bled frequently, pigeons were applied to his head, and a cock "cloven by the back" to his feet. Sir Walter Raleigh, from his prison-chamber in the Tower, sent a cordial which was tested and administered with the Privy Council's special leave; it gave some slight but temporary relief. The King came down to visit his son, but the doctors dissuaded him from seeing the pitiful delirious wreck that had, a brief week ago, been England's *beau ideal*. James went away overcome with grief, and, since he had been excluded, ordered that no others should be admitted to the prince. Princess Elizabeth, in despair, disguised

herself in the hope of gaining an entrance, but her ruse was unsuccessful, and Henry was left to struggle with death alone save for the friends of his household and the prayers and wearying interrogations of the Archbishop of Canterbury. On November 6th, 1612, he died, at the age of eighteen, to the consternation of court and country. It seemed as if a light had gone out, leaving a darkened room—a light that no new Prince of Wales could easily rekindle.

Scarce two months later Elizabeth was betrothed. The match had been her brother's work, and so she welcomed it, grateful that one way remained to her of honouring his memory. On December 27th, she was affianced at Whitehall to Frederick, the Elector Palatine. There was little ceremony because of the Prince's death; the articles of betrothal were read by the King's secretary so badly "that it moved an unseasonable laughter as well in the contractors as the standers-by, which was soon silenced by the Archbishop." After the betrothed had sealed their promise publicly with a kiss, a sermon ended the procedure. The Palatine "very faire and suitable" was "apparelled in purple velvet richly laced with gold lace. The Lady to make an even mixture of joy and mourning wore blacke sattin with a little silver lace and a plume of white feathers in her head, which fashion was taken up the next day of all the young gallants of the Court and Citty, which hath made white feathers dear of the sudden."

Elizabeth's life was destined to remain just such a mixture of joy and mourning. A few years later, her husband, as the champion of German Protestantism, imprudently accepted the throne of Bohemia to which he had no dynastic claim. Defeated in battle, he found himself an outcast; in its turn, the Palatinate was attacked and conquered, and for many weary years, before and after her husband's death, Elizabeth experienced penury and exile, never losing her spirit nor her hope.

Such joy as she had came from her devotion to her husband and her children, and the loyalty to her cause of many volunteers from England, among them the very youths who had bought white plumes in honour of her betrothal.

. . . . . .

So, once more Charles found himself alone. He never saw his sister again. At first his quiet life was undisturbed by his brother's death, for James, remembering in spite of himself how often Henry had annoyed him, determined not to let his younger son "have the reins loose" so early as his brother. But, inevitably, as heir to the throne Charles' position had altered, and he began to appear in public, where the quiet dignity of his ways was sufficiently unusual to attract attention.

There was a sweetness and courtesy in his demeanour which contrasted well with the prevalent ill-manners of Whitehall. For Charles grew to adolescence in a most unsavoury atmosphere. King James' preference for good looks to brains and Queen Anne's love of dancing and dressing-up set the tone of the court. The smart set was led by Frances, Countess of Essex, who was engaged in a dangerous flirtation with the Earl of Somerset, the King's handsome favourite. The countess had been married to her present husband as a girl of thirteen, and even then, Frances Howard's dusky beauty had been notable. Her boy-husband had been sent to sea, where his natural reserve and roughness were emphasized, but Frances stayed at court where her beauty blossomed amid luxurious and artificial surroundings. When the young Earl of Essex returned from sea more detached and uncouth than before, his presence suited ill with her flirtations. But Frances was used to having her own way, nor did she intend any mere man to prevent her. Before long she had engineered a divorce, preventing the earl by feminine wiles and petty deceits from consummating the marriage, then

holding him up to scorn and obtaining her freedom on the ground of impotency. In almost indecent haste she then plighted herself to Somerset, and in January 1613, in all the glory of royal favour, the wedding took place. Somerset, who had begun life as Robert Carr, a poor Scot, was now at the height of his power. It was short-lived. One of his secretaries, Thomas Overbury, had disapproved of the match, and on some pretext the King had committed him to the Tower. But Frances still feared his influence over Somerset. He died suddenly and mysteriously shortly before the marriage. Three years later an apothecary's lad confessed on his deathbed that Overbury had been poisoned at Frances' instigation. An unfriendly official carried the tale to the King, who was already tiring of Somerset's greed and his wife's haughty ways. A public investigation followed, and the tale proved true. Somerset and his countess were condemned to death, though the sentence was commuted to imprisonment in the Tower.

Amid the reverberations of this *cause célèbre* Charles left his childhood behind him. It may have increased his feeling of isolation; for he could have nothing in common with his father's courtiers. He and Essex were never attracted to each other, perhaps because they were too much alike in their reserve, perhaps because of some early prejudice implanted in Charles' mind by the gibes of Frances and her set. It was unfortunate, for Essex was at least an honest man, both now and thirty years later when he led the Parliamentary army to fight against the King.

Among Charles' playmates in youth was another whom he was to meet later, Denzil Holles, the son of his father's vice-chamberlain. High principled and forthright, of courtly manners and good breeding in spite of his puritan outlook on life, there was much that was attractive in this young lad, who was destined in the years to come to be imprisoned with Eliot and to face Rupert

at Edgehill. Charles, however, had no real friends at this impressionable age, when a comrade of good judgment and wide sympathies might have wielded an influence over him productive of much good in later years. It was not an easy time in which to live. The men who had been at the height of their power when Queen Elizabeth died, were giving way to a new generation more introspective, and less easily content with the outward show of life. Men were beginning to analyse their politics and their religion, and the theory of kingship no less than the theory of free will was under review. To arm him for his work in life, Charles needed a sympathetic temper, a respect for the opinion of others, and a firm judgment to guide him in the confused years ahead. They were the very gifts in which he was deficient. His silence covered, not self-assurance, but self-distrust; and from his father, who was as full of theories as any of his contemporaries, he imbibed the pernicious doctrines of absolutism, and accepted them as incontrovertible. The absence of any free discussion prevented him from realizing that different views might yet be honest ones. He lacked both sympathy and humour, and nothing was less likely to foster these gifts than his lonely adolescence. None the less, he was now, in his budding manhood, a creditable prince "in behaviour sober, grave, sweete, in speeche very advised." So the news-writers described him, adding that his understanding was reputed to be deeper than his brother's had been; moreover, he was willing to take advice, a rare gift in princes. In person he was less than average height and partly for this reason he looked his best on horseback. His high forehead bespoke intelligence, and the dark, rather prominent eyes gave him a melancholy air unusual in one so young. His hair was of a light brown and he resembled his Danish mother, rather than his father. His stutter had disappeared, but to the end of his life he spoke with a certain hesitance.

In consequence, he never wasted words, which gave his conversation a certain attractiveness of which he was unconscious. His mind was still set on the improvement of his body. At St. James' Palace, where his household was established after his brother's death, he practised certain running exercises every day. Despite dissuasion, he insisted on riding a great charger, which he mastered so well that King James, coming across from Whitehall to see what "Baby Charles" could do, was delighted with his skill. James began to be proud of his son, and in November 1616 created him Prince of Wales.

In spite of the steady improvement in his health, Charles was still too delicate for a public show to be possible in the inclement weather. Nor was the Queen present, lest she should be reminded too poignantly of the other Prince of Wales, the son she had lost. Charles came quietly by water from Richmond to the Palace of Whitehall, where the King awaited him. The Prince comported himself with his usual dignity, showing no sign of the regret he may have felt that his brother's memory and his own poor health invested the occasion with less than its wonted lustre. He had cause for discontent, at this time, for he still felt himself denied his true place in his father's esteem. Somerset had been ousted from the King's affection but another had taken his place. George Villiers, the new favourite, had come to court under the patronage of Archbishop Abbot and the Earl of Pembroke, both opponents of the Howard faction, to whom Somerset had been allied by his marriage. Thus, politics and the King's whims were entwined. James had been attracted at once by the youth's charm, but Somerset's influence at first prevented Villiers from obtaining a post in the King's bedchamber. The newcomer, however, had quick wits as well as good looks. He ingratiated himself with the Queen, whom the Countess of Somerset

snubbed, and was particularly urbane when James showed signs of wearying of Somerset's tantrums. He achieved admission to the bedchamber and became Master of the Horse, and after Somerset's disgrace was created in quick succession, Viscount, Earl, and Marquis of Buckingham.

Charles at first hated him, envying the easy friendliness which had so attracted the King, and which Villiers now employed in trying to gain the Prince's favour, partly for reasons of policy, partly through genuine good nature. Charles resented his approaches and behaved like a sulky schoolboy. The King lost his temper! On one occasion, Charles put a ring of the favourite's on his own finger, and lost it, perhaps by design. Villiers complained to James, and the King scolded Charles so severely that he cried like a child, and was dismissed the royal presence in disgrace. What pent-up jealousy and desires lay behind those tears? But the Prince after all was a boy, and not content merely to cry! Within a couple of months he was again in disgrace and this time the King boxed his ears. But Charles, no doubt, was content for he had earned the buffet by a glorious jest. He had concealed himself in the garden at Greenwich when Villiers passed that way, and had turned a water-spout full upon the unsuspecting favourite!

This was the state of affairs when Charles became Prince of Wales. It says much for Villiers' persistency and even temper that he continued his efforts to win over the Prince. At first, progress was slow, but Charles' jealousy dwindled naturally as his own importance increased. As heir to the throne, he could afford to be gracious to his father's favourite, and, after all, it would be good to have a friend. Buckingham pressed his advantage. He had certain superficial abilities and pleasant manners that made him a good companion. He was so obviously a successful man of the world that

the young Prince could not but be flattered by his approaches. He treated Charles as a man, whose experience of life equalled his own, praised his exploits in the chase or the tilt-yard, and at the same time showed deference to him as Prince of Wales. Above all, instead of stirring up strife between Charles and the King, he did all he could to increase the latter's affection for his son, and so gave Charles his heart's desire, the wholehearted love of his father. Charles repaid Buckingham by gratitude and affection which grew steadily. It is true that there were still occasional quarrels, but only one, which arose over a game of tennis when Charles was seventeen, was serious enough to attract the King's attention. He insisted on a public reconciliation which took the form of a feast in the Prince's honour given by Buckingham at his new country house at Wanstead. Thereafter the two young men were seldom apart, and Charles' pleasure in this new companionship grew deeper after his mother's death in 1619. He had been very dear to Anne in the last few years when her increasing indisposition precluded her from joining in the court festivities she had loved. James had ceased to care for her and seldom came near her, and when she died at Hampton Court, Charles came down to her alone while the King continued to hunt at Newmarket. She spoke lightly to the Prince of her illness, and no effort was made to bring her special medical aid. Her death made no difference to England and very little difference to James; Charles probably felt it most, and his new friendship proved a source of comfort. With Buckingham he found a new world opening to him full of possible adventure in the realms of war and politics. He lost much of his old shyness and threw himself into life with zest, taking pleasure in the courtiers' attentions or the formal obeisance of foreign embassies. But at times the old doubts reasserted themselves. It was good to have someone like Buckingham beside him,

a man without hesitancies or fears, a friend with whom to make plans for the future.

. . . . .

Thus, Charles became a man. His childhood was forgotten for the moment. Yet the impressions of childhood form the mould in which is set the character of the man to be. Charles' impressions were of the sanctity of physical fitness and mental agility, as typified by his brother and sister and by the King's favourites. He was bitterly conscious of his own shortcomings in these respects. It became his ambition to be a successful man of action, though by nature he was more fitted to meditate than to act. Yet the sense of inferiority inculcated by the retirement in which he was kept before his brother's death and his loneliness during early youth, made him liable in adult years to be swayed by any "plausible counsellor," so that even his friends complained that he did "love too much a versatile man." Thus came about that paradox in his character, his vacillation at times of crisis when strong and consistent action was essential, and the sudden bursts of extreme and often irremediable action, in which he unconsciously attempted to attain his youthful ideal of the strong man.

Never more clearly did the repressions of childhood reappear disastrously in later years. For the moment, however, they seemed to have been cast aside, as Charles emerged from the obscurity of his childhood, approved by his father's people, and strengthened by the love of his friend.

CHAPTER II

BUCKINGHAM

> "Who rules the Kingdom? The King. Who rules the King? The Duke. Who rules the Duke? The Devil. Let the Duke look to it."—*Contemporary pasquinade.*

EVERY New Year the Palace of Whitehall was the scene of festivities, so magnificent in conception, so luxurious in display, that foreign visitors to London marvelled at the wealth of the court, and the country gentlemen read their news letters in puzzlement and dismay. In January 1618, Buckingham became a marquis, and the climax of the rejoicings was the Prince's masque, which Ben Jonson had written, and in which Charles himself performed. It was a great occasion for him. He was just seventeen, a slim, graceful youth, still too short of breath, as an observer noted, to cut many capers with ease but moving with careful dignity through the set measures of the dance, making no mistake in time or movement, and excelling all in his formal obeisance to the lady he partnered. Yet the masque as a whole was dull, a tedious affair, and when the noble dancers began to flag as each pair in turn performed the Spanish dance, the choleric King grew impatient and shouted aloud "Why don't they dance? What did they make me come here for? Devil take you all, dance!" Whereupon, Buckingham "immediately sprang forward cutting a score of lofty and very minute capers with so much grace and agility that he not only appeased the ire of his angry lord but rendered himself the admiration and delight of everybody." When the dance was over James embraced his son, but Buckingham

he patted absurdly on the cheek. The episode is related by a gentleman in the train of the Venetian ambassador, whose account of the evening, which in turn bored and intrigued him, has rescued it from the oblivion of a score of other such occasions. For the music, "some jigs which we did not understand," the Venetian had little praise; "spoiled as we are by the graceful and harmonious music of Italy the composition did not strike us as very fine." And it is the elaborate scenery and the "technique" of the production rather than the masque itself which he admired. His criticism was embittered by his own discomfort, for the Venetian box was crowded by the intrusion of a supercilious Spaniard who asked for "'two fingers breadth of room' and placed himself more comfortably than any" .... "I have no patience with these Dons," the narrator digressed, "it was observed that they were scattered about in all the principal places. The ambassador was near the King; others with gold chains round their necks sat among the lords of the Council; others were in their own box taking care of the ambassadress, and then this fellow must needs come into ours." During the two hours wait, before James arrived at six o'clock, the Venetians amused themselves by admiring the new banqueting hall and quizzing the ladies, all of whom wore or carried delicate plumes, their jewels gleaming in the twilight like so many stars, their dresses of many colours falling from neck to ground with no waist and long, close sleeves, while "the plump and buxom displayed their bosoms very liberally, and those who were lean went muffled up to the throat." The Venetians noted that "amongst much grain there was also a mixture of husk and straw," but that the beauties outnumbered the shrivelled women as the narrator, being short-sighted, was informed by his friends who "kept exclaiming 'Oh, do look at this one! Oh, see her! Whose wife is that one on the row and that

pretty one near, whose daughter is she?'" So we say farewell to the gentlemen from Venice, "writhing with tediousness" but perhaps pretending to greater boredom than in fact, they felt.

. . . . .

The year marked by the Prince's masque saw his first real immersion in political affairs. The question of his marriage became a leading matter for speculation.

The last confused years of James I's reign centre round the destinies of his children. In the autumn of 1618 the crown of Bohemia was offered to the Elector Palatine, by the Protestant Bohemians, who would not accept the Emperor's Catholic nominee. Frederick's rash acceptance of the crown to which he could lay no just claim, was the signal for an outbreak of religious war in Germany which lasted thirty years, and soon became embittered by nationalist aspirations and jealousies, as Habsburg Spain came to the aid of the Habsburg Emperor, and Denmark, Sweden and France, in turn supported the flagging arms of Protestantism. In 1618, however, the trouble was only beginning. England seemed the natural champion of the Palatine, while Charles, genuinely anxious to help his sister, and Buckingham, always full of fresh designs he had not the ability to fulfil, were as eager for war as any London apprentice. But the King's mind was cast in a pedantic mould, and he could not forget that his son-in-law was the aggressor. He would help him by diplomacy and not by arms. His thoughts reverted to the idea of a Spanish marriage for the Prince of Wales that thereby Spain's friendship might be won and Philip III's influence with the Emperor exerted in Frederick's favour. The scheme fitted in with James' great dream of himself as the peacemaker of Europe. His own irritating ways and his intellectual snobbery did not prevent him from envisaging a world whose inhabitants dwelt together in amity. He saw himself establishing Utopia, with diplomacy and a

marriage alliance as his tools, in a Europe wracked by the death agonies of religious wars and the growing-pains of adolescent nation-states. If his own limitations and the prejudice of his contemporaries turned his dreams to mockery, at least, he deserves respect for ideas in advance of his age.

Thus James remained inactive while the rival factions at court intrigued, and those who were dubbed Puritans for their ultra-Protestantism, were alienated yet further from the King. By 1620 Frederick had been driven out of Bohemia and there was a danger of his own domains on the Rhine being invaded by the Emperor's troops. But James did not believe this would happen, over-estimating not only his own influence over Philip, but the latter's influence with the Emperor. Meanwhile two events at home increased the power of the pro-Spanish faction. One was the return of Gondomar, a haughty and unscrupulous grandee, as the ambassador of Spain, and the other was the conversion of Buckingham to the project of the Spanish alliance. As often, personalities were to decide the course of politics: Gondomar, Buckingham, Charles himself. Upon these depended the fate of the gallant but foolhardy Frederick and the high-hearted Elizabeth.

Buckingham the favourite was not as empty-headed as his predecessor had been, nor had he the courtier's usual sins of covetousness and ambition. "He needed no ambition—who was so seated in the hearts of two such masters." Thus the historian Clarendon wrote of him, adding that his misfortune lay in the very uniqueness of his position. "He never made a noble and a worthy friendship with a man so near his equal that he would frankly advise him for his honour and true interest against the current or rather the torrent of his impetuous passions." Instead he veered from one violent affection to another, making with each new acquaintance to whom he felt himself attracted "so

many marriages for better and worse, and so many leagues offensive and defensive." In the same warm-hearted and sanguine spirit, he would embark with his new allies upon great schemes, that only specialized knowledge or real statesmanship could conclude successfully. But Buckingham was devoid of all such qualities, and was all the more dangerous for a spice of talent. As his unpopularity grew his lust for power developed, his good-nature was marred by irritability, and his arrogance offended yet further aristocrats whose place he had usurped. Thus noted a contemporary "a great distemper of humours was engendered at court that distilled itself soon into the veins of the country."

For months, Buckingham breathed fire against all Spaniards and succour for the fair Elizabeth of Bohemia. Then, in 1620, he suddenly changed his tune. He had fallen in love. The lady was the high-born daughter of the Earl of Rutland; and an alliance of such lustre seemed to Buckingham's grasping and ambitious mother a fitting culmination to the honours which had been heaped upon her son. There was, however, no diffidence in her match-making, and through her very audacity she succeeded. Details of dowry and marriage settlement were completed, and only the difficulty of religion remained unsurmounted. The Earl of Rutland was a Catholic and liked the match little, but Katherine, his daughter, a simple amiable creature, was dazzled by the attentions of the handsome Marquis, and she had neither the brains nor the wish to counter the arguments of Bishop Williams who undertook to convert her to the Anglican faith. The fiery Welsh bishop, intellectually competent but spiritually barren, was ingratiating himself with the favourite and the King, and found his new task to his liking. When he was on the verge of success an incident occurred which precipitated matters. Lady Katherine spent a day with Lady Buckingham and failed to return home in the evening. It is true that a sudden

indisposition had prevented her, but her angry father preferred to believe the worst. He would not receive again a daughter who thought as lightly of her honour as of her religion. Katherine had no alternative. She declared herself converted and on May 16th, 1620, was married quietly to Buckingham in the presence of her father and James. "Fond Kate" as he called her, became a favourite of the King's, who romped with her babies, and treated her with tolerant kindliness. Buckingham proved an affectionate if unstable husband, and on the whole Kate was happy.

One result of the alliance with the Earl of Rutland, however morosely the latter might regard it, was that Buckingham was brought into friendly relations with the other great Catholic family at court: the Howards. Thus, his anti-Spanish attitude began to be modified, and his jealousy of the Dutch, whose attacks on British seamen seemed to him to reflect on his credit as Admiral of England, widened this breach between him and the popular party.

Meanwhile the King was being won over by the blandishments of Gondomar, who dangled before him the lure of a marriage alliance between Charles and the Infanta. Diego Sarmiento de Acuna, Count of Gondomar, was a don of old Castile, supercilious and arrogant but a very cultured gentleman. James derived true enjoyment from his company, admired the library he had collected, and sunned himself in the reciprocal respect of the Spaniard, who appreciated the King's book-learning and did not scruple to flatter. The Prince also was gradually won, for it was observed that, although his judgment was good he would change his mind at once if James or Buckingham let drop a contrary word. He seemed entirely under their influence, and though every now and again some rebuff from his impetuous friend, who was inclined to treat the Prince as an inferior, would drive Charles in silent anger away

from court he would return, docile, the next day for fear of losing his father's daily blessing.[1] He liked the foreign ambassadors to pay attention to him, and Gondomar made the most of the Prince's easy response to flattery. Favours were sent from Madrid for Charles to wear in the Tilt-yard, and as he rode to the joust with the Infanta's colours on his helmet he did not find it difficult to imagine that his heart was on fire.

Crude reality broke in to hinder Gondomar's plans. Heedless of both James and Philip, the Emperor invaded the Palatinate and Elizabeth and her husband were driven into exile. This was a very different matter from the war in Bohemia when Frederick had been the aggressor. Charles, forgetting dreams of love, pleaded with tears in his eyes for leave to raise a royal army in his sister's defence. Young men volunteered to fight in Germany, and James himself was sufficiently moved to summon Parliament to see what could be done. But nothing was done: partly because the Commons, in spite of their enthusiasm, were unwilling to untie the purse-strings until their domestic grievances had been satisfied; partly because parliaments always irritated James and nothing could have been more potent in cooling his enthusiasm; partly because Gondomar went on working steadily behind the scenes. The Parliament was eventually dissolved in anger because James denied the Commons' right to debate foreign affairs. In the interim the attack on monopolies, involving the downfall of the Lord Chancellor Bacon, had side-tracked the Commons' interest in the Palatinate. Charles, sitting each day as a peer of the realm in the House of Lords taking part in its debates trying in vain to mediate in the interests of the attacked ministers, obtained his first glimpse of the intransigeance of

[1]For, noted the observer, again a Venetian, it was still the custom "for every child on first meeting his parents each day to kneel and ask their blessing. This happens in the public streets and in the most frequented and conspicuous places of the city, no matter what their age."

Parliament. He saw a brilliant and, in the main, an honest man brought to ruin through the hostility of the country gentlemen in the House of Commons, and noticed that, in spite of their high talk, no money was forthcoming for a successful venture in war, and returned to court life after the dissolution convinced that his father's scorn of parliaments was unassailable and right.

The vision of some of those country gentlemen, their honesty of purpose, and their grim determination to make full use of such abilities as had been vouchsafed to them, Charles had neither the imagination nor the opportunity to understand. He turned his mind again, as after all was natural, to the absorbing question of his own marriage.

There had been for a while a suggestion that the Spanish match should be dropped, and that an alliance with the young Princess of France, Henrietta Maria, should take its place. "A wife ought to have no will but that of her husband," she had said, when the religious difficulty was raised; were they but the artless words of a child, or had she already decided that any woman worth the name would see to it that her husband's will was moulded according to her own desire?

However, the French overtures came to nothing, partly because the envoy who bore them was the worst type of insolent Frenchman, earning from Bacon the comment, "he is a tall proper man . . . tall men are like high houses, of four or five storeys, wherein commonly the uppermost room is worst furnished."

So the Spanish match was revived, but throughout 1622 the negotiations languished. Nothing final could be arranged until the Pope's dispensation had been obtained. He would not give it, unless freedom of worship was promised to the Catholics in England. The months passed, and all the while the Spaniards were obtaining what they wanted—James' inaction in Europe.


PHILLIP the 4.th by ꝯ grace of God King of Spayne and India. etc.
Charles by ꝯ grace of God Prince of Wales Duke of Cornewall. etc.
Thy large Dominions, and thy powerfull sway,
(Which sun-burnt-Indians doe with feare obay)
Thy Stately Ships and golden Myneralls,
Thy hardy troopes vnder Stout Generalls:
All these (great Monarch) blazon forth thy Story,
And may they last to shyne eternall glory.
But above all thy Predecessors graced
That in the armes of love thou hast embraced
Great Britaines heyre; whom God by sea and land,
Blesse and protect with his most powerfull hand,
That faithe defender may in safety see
His dearest Son from plotts and perills free.
Are to be sould at the globe ouer against the Exchange.

CHARLES I AS PRINCE OF WALES
with Philip IV of Spain
(From a Contemporary Print)

Moreover the accession of the young Philip IV in Spain, under the sway of the minister Olivares, had changed the situation. The Infanta's own disinclination to the match became apparent, for she was a pious, spiritually-minded girl to whom marriage with a heretic would have been purgatory. But the negotiations were still useful as a blind though after the fall of Heidelburg, the Palatine's chief city, Charles began to tire of them, and murmur that he wished to see his bride, and to have the matter settled, one way or another. So, when Gondomar left England in the autumn of 1622, he remarked laughingly to Charles that he had better come and see the Infanta for himself. Gondomar had no intention of being taken seriously, but expected the affair to die a natural death. He had, however, forgotten to reckon with Buckingham's imagination and Charles' romantic youth.

Perhaps "Steenie" thought of it first—thus the King was wont to style his favourite, fancying in him some resemblance to St. Stephen! Or perhaps Charles recalled a surprise visit of his uncle, the King of Denmark, eight years before. His incognito had been so successful that he had made his way right into the Queen's chamber where she sat at dinner, before he had been recognized. Why should not Charles, with Steenie to support him, slip out of England and post across Europe, to pay his addresses in person to the fair, unknown Infanta? King James got wind of the project, and, of course, forbade it, but perhaps his prohibition lacked severity, as he remembered that he too had once sailed across the sea to win his bride. Charles' persuasions and Buckingham's affectionate raillery wore down his opposition, and at last he gave his unofficial consent to the mad project, with a great many heart-burnings as soon as the young folk had left his presence. For weeks, however, he heard no more of the plan, and ceased to worry about it. Then, one

Monday in February at Theobalds, the two asked leave to go for a couple of days hunting.

"See that you be with us upon Friday night," said the King.

"Sire," answered Buckingham. "if we should stay a day or two longer, I hope your Majesty will pardon us."

"Well, well!" quoth the King, and left it at that.

Next day, a small company of five or six persons slipped eastward through Gravesend and thence by a detour to Dover. Two heavily-bearded figures in big riding-coats rode impatiently ahead. At Gravesend one of the beards fell off, and a puzzled Mayor decided to send a messenger after the party to investigate, but what he discovered sent him home again in silence. Another too shrewd official had also to be silenced expensively before the company got safely on board at Dover, and changed one set of troubles for another—a Channel crossing, on which the first that fell sick was the Prince, and Buckingham the one "that continued it longest." Then came the safe anonymity of English gentlemen on the continent. Steenie wrote to the King, their "deare Dad and Gossip," that as they rode post-haste to Paris, he had four falls by the way, while Charles proved himself "so much more stronger than he was," that he held up his stumbling horse "by maine strength of manhood" and cried still "On, on, on!"

At Paris, their first place of call was a periwig maker's, where they repaired the ravages of the crossing and removed the false beards. Thence they went to court, still maintaining their incognito. With the help of one of the officials they obtained an entry, and that evening witnessed a masque in which the Queen took part. She was a Spanish princess, the Infanta's sister, and Charles had eyes only for her, his head full of dreams of his mistress in Madrid. He scarcely noticed the King's young sister, a vivacious girl in her "teens," who danced gaily through the masque and into the heart of

many an admiring courtier. She may have glanced in passing at the two strangers, may even have tried to entice a smile from the one who looked so solemn. If so, she was disappointed. Charles was not thinking of Henrietta Maria.

They stayed five days in Paris, their identity undiscovered, and then pressed on to Madrid. The English ambassador, the excellent Earl of Bristol, was informed of their coming, and though he was somewhat affronted that he had not been forewarned, he stifled his annoyance for the sake of amity. Charles was received with true Spanish courtesy; he was given a public welcome, and the Queen of Spain sent him a basin and ewer of pure gold and a rich night-gown "very excellently perfumed." It were churlish indeed to complain, and yet, the climax, the love-scene between Charles and the Infanta, was withheld. He was not even permitted to see her near at hand, and though he climbed a tree, and, unbeknown, watched her walking in the garden, and though the Duchess of Buckingham sent out from London the best "perspective glasses" she could find, through which he might gaze on his lady from afar, this was scant fare on which to feed romantic love. At first, it is true, the revived negotiations seemed to prosper. The Infanta herself became reconciled to the match; she was styled the "Princess of England" and studied the new language zealously as Charles' presence fired her with the hope of one day achieving his conversion. Eventually the Pope's dispensation was obtained, for Charles, still imagining himself in the rôle of romantic wooer, seemed ready to make any concessions for the sake of his lady-love. For his part, all he asked was an assurance that his sister and her husband should be restored to the Palatinate. But Olivares, the Spanish minister, had no intention of offending the Emperor by interfering in Germany, and his stipulation that the Elector's eldest son must be brought

up at Madrid as a Catholic, if Spain were to help to recover the Palatinate, proved an insurmountable stumbling block, as probably the Spaniards expected.

As the months passed, Madrid became less pleasant an adventure. The servants whom James had sent out, so that his son might live in proper state, disputed among themselves in their enforced idleness. Even Archie Armstrong, the fool, caused more friction than amusement. Above all, Buckingham the Prince's friend and Bristol King James' ambassador, were at loggerheads. Buckingham quarrelled, too, with the Spanish grandees; he had respect neither for their manners, nor for their women-folk! He began to weary of the whole business; he longed for the excitement and intrigues of the English court; he even felt homesick for his wife and upbraided her for not writing him in detail about the exploits of their baby girl. She replied at once in a long letter.

"Pretty Moll" was just learning to walk. "When she is set to her feet and held by her sleeves she will not go softly but stamp and set one foot afore another very fast." Her mother reported her "so full of pretty plays and tricks. Everybody says she grows every day more like you." King James loved to let her play about his privy lodgings, and smiled at her efforts to dance, and to snap her fingers and shake her little apron when she heard the tunes of certain country jigs. So the antics of a child were written across Europe and have travelled down the years! But the Duchess wrote also of other things which made Buckingham eager to be home—above all, of Lord-Treasurer Middlesex and his efforts to usurp the place of favourite. King James was beginning to be impatient and his failing health made a speedy return desirable. It was a relief when in the autumn news came that a fleet was on its way to Spain to bring the Prince home either with or without his

bride. James was ill and could not bear their absence any longer.

Meanwhile in England feeling ran high. It was barely twenty years since Gunpowder Plot had been discovered on the very verge of successful execution. It had so amazed and horrified the public that three hundred years have not sufficed to rescue Guy Fawkes from annual destruction in the bonfires of the street. To the Protestants of Charles' day, popery was a treasonable practice, which preached that all crime was lawful in the interests of the Pope, and this strong and vivid fear was a dominant note in their life. That, on the whole, the Catholic laymen were peaceable folk, and the fear was largely false did not lessen its potency.

While Charles was in Spain, every rumour was ominous. If he were not murdered by stealth, he would be married secretly at a Mass. It was impossible that he should return unscathed either in soul or body. People did not know which to fear most, his conversion or his death.

Had they known all the concessions he was granting including freedom of worship to the Catholics in England, their fear would have amounted to panic. Even James, who declared at first that "he durst venture his son Charles with all the Jesuits in the world, he knew him to be so well grounded in the Protestant religion," grew anxious as the weeks passed and urged him to attend Protestant worship regularly, and not to be afraid of his religion. Yet the King need not have been anxious. Charles felt no antipathy to the Catholic faith such as he felt towards the Calvinists. His own love of formality and ceremonial made him in many ways sympathetic towards Catholicism. Though she never openly avowed it, his mother had received much comfort from it, and in his youth he had connected it with her, and with many worthy gentlemen whom he met daily at court. He had no desire therefore to persecute Catholicism, and

being by nature gentle and seldom cruel by design, he found it easy to promise toleration to such Catholics as lived quietly and loyally in his realm. In his relations to Catholicism he was consistent throughout his life and far in advance of his age, but, as in so much else, the twist in his character showed in the manner in which he acted rather than in what he did. The unseemly ending of the Spanish negotiations were more blameworthy than the actual concessions to the Catholics. As to the danger of conversion, Charles' quiet certainty about his own religious convictions prevented him from ever envisaging such a possibility. He had accepted as truth the doctrines of the Anglican Church and the support which his weak nature sought for and failed to find in one human being after another he received increasingly from his very real if rather formal faith. Thus, at the end when he turned to that alone he achieved the one triumph of his life. But as yet, to the onlooker, his piety seemed in keeping with his modesty, his reserve, his exceptional self control in matters of sex, and as liable as these other qualities to the sudden passionate changes of youth. So England watched Madrid in anxious forebodoing.

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Autumn came, and James fell ill. Surely, now the Prince would return! At long last one October morning, news came that the fleet had been sighted off Portsmouth. Had the worst happened? Was the marriage accomplished? Horsemen came post-haste to London. The Prince and Buckingham had landed—and alone! The Spanish Infanta had been left behind in Spain.

Then what rejoicings there were, what ringing of bells and lighting of bonfires! On Blackheath alone, forty loads of wood were burnt, and as the care-free crowds met the wood carts straining up the hill, they set their torches to the wheels, and taking out the horses,

burnt the cart-loads as they stood. In Cheapside and Bread Street, Cornhill and the Vintry, and all the streets of the City, hogsheads of wine, butts of sack, and tables laden with provisions were put out for all to enjoy, that apprentices and journeymen, citizens and vagabonds alike might welcome home their Prince. As Charles and Buckingham rode towards London they met a sad procession on its way from Newgate to the gallows at Tyburn. With a happy gesture Charles reprieved the condemned men. It was his hour. Now at last he was a hero!

It was not merely the heady wine of popularity which made him feel so unwontedly sure of himself. During the six months at Madrid he had grown up. He had sailed for Spain fired by a youthful romance; he had suffered disillusion, and his vanity was piqued by the fact that he returned alone. He had left his proxy with Bristol, for it had seemed that the alliance was on the verge of completion, but once away from Madrid, the Spaniards' dilatoriness, their distrust of his word, above all, their lack of zeal for the Palatinate, festered in Charles' mind, till he broke free once and for all from the dream of a Spanish bride. But at least in those six months he had seen something of the world, he had experienced the strength of his own religion, and he had come home a free man. His self-confidence was marvellously increased.

Everybody noticed the change in him. "His journey to Spain has much improved him," wrote the news-writer John Chamberlain. "He is free from all vicious inclinations, his actions gracious and graceful," in fact, "a fine gentleman." He soon recalled the proxy he had left with Bristol. Giving vent to smouldering resentments and urged on by Buckingham, who did not pause to disentangle personal pique from political expediency, he stood forward as the champion of an anti-Spanish policy. A few who had been with him

abroad were sorry for the change. Francis Cottington, his secretary, had fallen in love with the Spaniards. Their courtesy, their reserve, their romantic mystery seemed to him pre-eminently satisfying; he adopted their manners for his own and, unlike most young men momentarily attracted by an attitude to life, he maintained the pose to the end of his days. Even Archie, the fool, had not found the time too wearisome, and when his child was born many years later, paid a tribute to a store of happy memories by christening him Philip after the King of Spain.

Charles, on the other hand, suffered a severe reaction. He was not even courteous to his former friends. Count Mansfeldt was visiting England in connexion with an expedition financed by James to aid the German Protestants. The Count was entertained in the very apartments which had been prepared for the Spanish Infanta. The ewer and basin of gold which the Queen of Spain had given the Prince on his arrival were now bestowed by him with casual insolence upon one of his footmen. These affronts were partly the over-emphasis of youth, but they serve to illustrate the darker side to the news-writer's glowing picture of the Prince. Throughout his life Charles remained free from vices, but he was devoid also of imagination, and this defect nullified a host of good intentions, and caused him frequently to wound and embitter friend as well as foe.

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The year 1624 was a golden time for Charles. Rightly or wrongly, the people were delighted with the attitude which he and Buckingham adopted when Parliament met in the spring. War with Spain was the cry of the moment, and Charles found himself for a while the darling of the House of Commons. At the opening of the session he spoke little, leaving the oratory to Buckingham, but the short speech he made showed that he possessed

good sense and ability, and afterwards he attended the debates in the Lords with regularity, and threw himself into public affairs with ardour. He did not appear to resent the favourite's arrogant assertiveness and supported the impeachment of Lord Middlesex which Buckingham urged forward with vigour. The Treasurer's pro-Spanish leanings made him an easy victim, and popular prejudice and Buckingham's jealousy were satisfied together. James, in spite of a tired old age, was more shrewd than either his son or his favourite. "By God, Steenie," he cried, "you are a fool, and will shortly repent this folly, and will find that in this fit of popularity you are making a rod with which you will be scourged yourself." His words proved true, as Buckingham was soon to find, and as Charles learnt in bitter years to come. For, upon this very reef of ministerial responsibility his own ship of state was to founder, and the impeachment of Middlesex which he encouraged led in due course to the impeachment of Strafford which broke his heart.

But Charles had never room in his mind for many lines of thought at once. For the moment, he was fired by the vision of making wars gloriously in a righteous cause. He and Buckingham drew up schemes which included expeditions by land as well as on the sea. Obviously, there would be need of allies in Europe. To this end, Buckingham broached again the old idea of a marriage between the Prince and Louis XIII's sister. The Commons of England disliked the match only one degree less than that with Spain. When England had a Popish Queen, what true Protestant could lie quietly in his bed at night? When her children, Papist like their mother, ruled in England, might not the fires of Smithfield be relit? But their Prince with his usual quiet dignity calmed their fears, assuring them that if God gave him a Popish lady for Queen, he would not alter in any way the present religious settlement.

It was growing hot in London, and the narrow streets were evil-smelling; the country gentlemen "in parliament assembled" began to think of hay-making and the harvest to follow. It was time they returned to their estates. Taking their Prince at his word, they were glad to adjourn at the end of May, prepared to reassemble in the autumn to vote then if required the necessary sinews of war.

But never again were Charles and Parliament to meet in happy concord. Buckingham's protagonist in France was none other than the great Richelieu, who was ready enough to make any promises England required of him, and equally ready to break them later on. But for his part he demanded concessions for the English Catholics, flatly contradictory to the spirit of Charles' undertaking to Parliament. Charles' first instinct was to let the negotiations drop. But Buckingham persuaded him to give way, and set out for France, empowered to accept Richelieu's conditions, and determined to efface the memory of slights at Madrid by a triumphant success in Paris. He negotiated the marriage treaty without further difficulty, for he had no lack of superficial skill, and in addition, he made love to the French Queen, dressed like a popinjay, and in the words of Clarendon, "overacted the whole nation in their own most peculiar vanities." In November he returned home, and in December the treaty was ratified by James and his son. The vexed question of Charles' marriage was settled at last.

Never was alliance more fraught with tragedy. It gave Charles a wife, loyal and loving, who was yet to be the cause of his ruin and plunge his country into civil war. In her frivolous youth, as in the bitter intrigues of her last sad years in England, she stood opposed to everything English, unable either to understand or be understood. The very strength of Charles' love for her was the measure of his weakness, for to

him love meant intellectual surrender. He could never keep his judgment independent of his emotions. So he fell under her domination as now he was under the domination of Buckingham. This fatal weakness, already suspected by keen observers, had been made manifest by the French negotiations. Through the persuasions of a friend he had broken his word to the Commons of England. Over and over again, such deceits were to occur; the same lack of mental stability, of common or garden honesty, was to alienate friends and embitter enemies.

What was the cause of this fatal streak of crookedness in a man who excelled in private virtues? It was not intentional deceit. At bottom it was the same fault as before: a lack of imagination so complete that Charles could see nothing of his opponents' point of view, frame no other argument than that immediately before him, conceive no other course of action than the one he was about to take, contrary though it might be to earlier assertions. And, on the other hand, consequent upon those lonely introspective childhood years, there remained the underestimation of his own judgment, and paradoxically a consciousness of self, an orientation of all things towards his own hopes and fears and good intentions, which blinded him as completely as any lack of conscientiousness to his obligations towards other people.

Whatever the psychological explanation, the fact remained. Charles could not be trusted and therein lay his failure as a King. And the seed of that mistrust was sown in the negotiation of the French alliance.

Autumn came, but no Houses of Parliament reassembled at Westminster. James, old and infirm, was over-ridden by Buckingham who, set on his own immediate concern, would not risk the treaty failing through the renewed suspicions of the Commons. But through the long winter nights, by the hearthside

in many a country home, gentlemen discussed the meaning of this prolonged adjournment and hated the French marriage the more they thought upon it. When they heard at quarter-sessions or on market-day bad news from Holland, they fixed upon Buckingham as the villain of the piece. For the expedition he had planned under Mansfeldt's leadership was perishing miserably, instead of marching in triumph on the Palatinate. Country yokels and vagabonds of the town, pressed into service and entirely untrained, ill-clothed and starving and stupefied by despair, died like flies on the coasts of Holland, while Buckingham fumbled in the toils of diplomacy, and dreaming of military glory in the future, failed to make provision for the day to come. And throughout England spread the shadow of discontent.

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In the spring of 1625, James died of a "tertian ague" complicated by eating too much fruit. He was usually a difficult invalid, but this time he took his physic with a docility which was held to be a certain prognostic of death. Buckingham and his mother attended the royal bedside and applied a plaster, but it only aggravated the King's misery, and some were even ready with the usual charges of murder! But James was beyond the reach of man's hatred and envy at last. He died, wearied and disillusioned, with none of his great dreams realized, and only this to comfort him that he had had the courage to dream.

Charles mourned his father sincerely and deeply. Often in these latter days James had tried the Prince and Buckingham with his old man's tantrums and vagaries. The favourite had been driven to tears and temper, but Charles had been wont to retire to a self-imposed confinement in his private room. It was a habit he retained, and his silent withdrawals were not without dignity, but there was this great disadvantage

that his feelings were never relieved by expression, and the clouds remained to darken and confuse the working of his over-anxious mind.

So now, on his father's death, he took refuge in his apartment at St. James' Palace. There, for nearly a week he stayed mourning his loss and facing the fact of his kingship.

The court waited; life was at a pause. What the King thought, nobody knew, whether grief, ambition, spiritual communings filled his mind! At length he reappeared, pale and sombre in a long, black cloak. His first public act was to attend service in his private chapel. Next day he walked from St. James' to Whitehall. The park, which his father had planned with loving care, lay about him in its fresh spring beauty. A tree that Prince Henry had planted as a boy, stood by his path; Henry was dead and he, Charles, was to be King, and not Archbishop! Did some memory of the childish quarrel cross his mind? He went on in silence, with inscrutable gaze, till the towers of the palace loomed ahead where a formal reception awaited him, public prayers and a meeting of Council. He could tarry no longer; he was the King! Thus, in a solitary walk, his reign began—and thus it was to end on a January morning when he walked that very path to meet his death on the scaffold in Whitehall.

CHAPTER III

HENRIETTA MARIA

"To comfort the Queen, who is unhappy as usual. . . ."—*Venetian Ambassador*, Sep., 1626.

TWENTY-FIVE years old and King of England, gracious in bearing, sweet in temper, exemplary in conduct, freed from effeminacy by his skill in the chase and his zeal for the pursuit of arms, surely a golden future was in store for such a Prince! In everything Charles was self-controlled and temperate, in his food, eating plentifully but of plain fare, and never at irregular hours; in his drink, preferring water and small beer, and an occasional glass of claret to excessive or heavy liquor; in his conversation, "rather slow than fluent" but pithy and rational "knowing a small diamond to be worth a great deal of rubbish." He blushed at immodest talk, and to the end it remained true that he had never violated a woman, struck a man, or spoken an evil word. Later, when a certain young woman, who became Jeremy Taylor's second wife, seemed to resemble the King in her looks, malicious gossip was ready to whisper that she was Charles' daughter. This scandal, based on nothing but the likeness, was contrary to all that was known of the young man, whose nearest approach to intrigue was some harmless verses written to a lady of the court. In 1625, gossip was more inclined to wander in the other direction for his lack of response to the flatteries of women was so marked that "he was thought less than man by some, till the happy fruit and satisfaction of a matrimonial bed vindicated that suspicion." As he drew nearer the end of his troubled life it was his pride that he had never caused anybody to wear black for his sake, and it is indeed remarkable that, in spite of some real persecution, this critical reign

was free from political executions, until the Commons seized power and Strafford and Charles himself were in turn struck down.

Of other virtues he had many, though it was this temperance and his gentle dignity which were most striking. He conducted his court with a seemliness very different from the indecent harum-scarum ways of his father's household. Herein the new King met his first difficulty, for, thinking it unfair that the death of a king should bring hardship upon faithful servants, he had retained James' officials in their posts, much to the disappointment of the Scottish attendants who had surrounded Charles since his youth. These were suitably rewarded but not advanced in office as they hoped. On the other hand, Charles found the members of his new household frequently drunken, extravagant, and unpleasingly loud in manner. He did not hesitate, however. Drunkenness was forbidden and the reins tightened in various ways. One Catholic courtier proved recalcitrant in his attendance at public prayers. His friends were amazed when the quiet young man, their King, broke into an angry cry: "If he will not come to my prayers, let him get out of my house." The King's reserve, then, hid something, in addition to amiability!

It hid, as yet only partly developed, intense religious feeling. True faith must experience the sadness of life before its full strength is revealed, and time alone would show whether the King's devotions were the outward and visible expression of true inward and spiritual grace, or whether they were but the complement in the religious sphere of the conventions of good manners and good taste upon which he insisted in all branches of court life.

Charles was at his best in conversation with such distinguished visitors as came to Whitehall. He showed himself to have a true appreciation of the arts, particularly of painting and architecture, to possess a sound

critical faculty, and to be intelligent but patient in argument. He read frequently from a small book said to contain certain maxims, written out by hand, but with characteristic reserve he showed the volume to none. Though he had studied well as a youth, he had no such deep love of book-learning as his father had possessed. He preferred to gain knowledge from the men he met, and deeply engrained in him was the desire to be a man of action. When quite a child, while Prince Henry still lived, he had longed to go soldiering, as many great men had done, in the service of the State of Venice; and the most precious possession which his brother had left him had been a "school of arms," with which he spent many hours working out mathematical problems, studying methods of encampment and building castles in the air! This unexpected streak of martial ardour in his otherwise passive temperament added by force of contrast an attractive piquancy to his personality. One who served him both as soldier and as secretary declared: "There was never a braver Prince better beloved or more fit to command."

Where, then, lay the rub? Why were the fair hopes of 1625 so quickly shattered? There was no secret vice, no "skeleton in the cupboard" so far as Charles himself was concerned—only, to each of his virtues an obverse aspect, less conducive to success. He was temperate, but how far was his moderation due to self-control or to lack of temptation. If the story of the illegitimate daughter were true, one's admiration for Charles would increase tremendously. For it would mean that he was capable of passion, and that in later years his chastity was an act of virtue, not an absence of desire. In all Charles' contacts with life one feels there is insufficient driving force behind his deeds. He is wrapped in the cotton wool of his own foregone conclusions and the prejudices he had not the imagination to uproot. Seldom did he touch reality. In his love

for Buckingham he most nearly experienced that passion which drives a man to sacrifice and salvation. When Buckingham died, something went out of his life, and he never entirely threw off the languor that made him turn away from the council-table to the chase at moments of crisis, or give way to others who felt more deeply than he in matters upon which he had already pledged himself. His passions were not deep enough for his self-control to have full value. If a stream is to turn a mill, it must be dammed in its course, it is true, but with insufficient power, stream and dam alike are useless.

It was the same with his other virtues. In the intellectual sphere, he was a critic rather than an original thinker, a connoisseur of art rather than an artist, a cobbler rather than a shoemaker, as he himself said in reference to the emendations he was wont to make upon his secretary's despatches. Thus, had times been normal, he might have been an adequate ruler, for he was neither a tyrant nor a fool, but he had not the intellectual insight, or the vision, to deal with problems and opponents far beyond the ordinary. His struggle with his parliaments might turn upon such points as arbitrary imprisonment, tunnage and poundage, and the rest, but behind each definite conflict lay principles and ideals only dimly realized by a few. England was in travail and a super-man might have withstood the nascent forces of democracy; it was beyond the power of a man who, among a host of good qualities of head and heart, lacked the essential virtues of sympathy and grit.

Not that Charles was entirely without a vision of his own which he conscientiously pursued. The breakdown of the ideal of unity which had been the gift of the Middle Ages to humanity, had resulted in the growth of the nations and of national monarchy. The Tudor age in England, frankly pragmatical, had accepted the

necessity of a strong kingship as a defence against foes without and the forces of disruption within, and the material prosperity of the early seventeenth century was the happy result of a commonsense absolutism. But with the years of peace and plenty came time for reflection and self analysis. James himself wrote a book on the true Law of Monarchy; while Filmer's *De Patriarcha* put forward in plausible terms the theory of the Divine Right of Kings. The sovereign was the father of his people, God's vice-regent on earth, above the laws, since his power was of God rather than man, compelled by inherent goodness to rule his people wisely and well, not according to their own wishes but as was best for them. It was not an ignoble ideal though untenable as an historical explanation of the monarchy. Equally unhistorical, but more in touch with reality, was the other school of thought which was feeling towards the idea that kingship was based on contract, and that if the sovereign broke the laws the people were justified in displacing him. The Civil War had to come and go before John Locke gave voice to this second theory, but throughout Charles' reign the vague feeling was growing that government must be by consent and that the law was supreme, its judges the protectors of every person of the land, not, as Bacon would have had it, the lions beneath the throne. To all such novelties in the way of political theory the King was deaf. He no more questioned the reality of the divine right by which he ruled than he questioned the Apostles' Creed. He never realized that if theories are to live they must mould themselves to circumstance. The time for absolutism in England was over; the country gentlemen whom the Tudors had trained so well in local government had acquired an interest in politics, and had no intention of keeping silent at Westminster on any matters of national import, whether or not they had hitherto been the preserve of the

prerogative. The increasing complexity of administration made government a much more expensive business than of old; no king now could possibly "live of his own" and as soon as the Commons realized they had control of the purse-strings, they began to aspire to a control of policy.

It did not need the complication of religion—and religion mattered more vitally than anything else in Stuart England—for conflict to be inevitable. That Charles honestly tried to rule well and that his opponents were far from generous, only made his failure the more tragic.

. . . . .

Among the papers of Mr. Secretary Conway under the date June 9th, 1625, there is a letter from the Mayor of Dover, submitting a report from a mariner with a journalistic instinct. He informs the Mayor that he has seen the new Queen at Boulogne, that she is in good health and very merry, and goes on to tell how he caught a glimpse of her viewing the sea "so near it was bold to kiss her feet, so that her Majesty was overshoes and thence returned with great pleasure." It is a piquant picture of the young girl of fifteen, princess of France and Queen of England, standing thus at the edge of her own land, careless of all that lay before her of love and tragedy. Of the husband to whom she had been wed by proxy a month ago in Paris she knew little. It was the English Ambassador, Lord Holland, who had wooed her, persuading her by his gallant bearing and light-hearted ways to think kindly of all English folk. Now, at last she was to see her bridegroom.

The Pope had bidden her wait sixteen days at Amiens to do penance for marrying without his dispensation. But she had outwitted him. For she had written to Charles to know what she should do, and he had replied so gravely that he could dally very little longer at Canterbury, where he awaited her, that she had given the Papal

Legate the slip, and hastened to Boulogne and the English ships, leaving her penance to look after itself. One can imagine the excited thoughts that chased through her brain! She hoped Charles would laugh at the story of the Legate's discomfiture! They said he seldom laughed, and was usually silent. Would he think her very frivolous? They said too that he had only one friend, the handsome Duke of Buckingham, upon whom his whole heart was set. She did not like the Duke; she had met him in Paris, and his arrogant ways offended her. Why wasn't the King's friend her own dear Lord Holland? Then, she would be happy indeed. She had told him that his wife should be one of her gentlewomen. A little frown came on the princess's pretty face as she reflected. Charles had answered gravely on that matter also. He had bidden her wait to choose her court until she had deliberated. A fig for deliberation! Truly, she could not be happy if he did not let her indulge her whims at times. She hoped he was not always so severe. A wave broke lazily over her feet, and she laughed merrily. She did not doubt she would succeed in winning her own way. She turned from the incoming tide smiling at her own thoughts and dazzling thereby an English mariner, who watched her open-mouthed, and returned to his ship to write to the Mayor of Dover.

So we may fancy the scene. By some such chance, the fact that the princess wet her shoes has survived oblivion for three hundred years, and with it the knowledge that it was with a merry heart that she set forth on her tragic venture.

When at length word came to Charles at Canterbury that the Queen had arrived at Dover, he left his court, and taking horse, rode across the downs to greet his bride. His speedy coming was unexpected, and she was about to dine when his presence was announced. She kept him waiting while she made a hasty toilet. Then,

with eyes downcast, she came into his presence, finding it unexpectedly easy to play the rôle of shy maidenhood, so solemn did he look standing in his plain riding-suit at the end of the long hall, his hair upon his shoulders, his eyes, gentle yet sad, dark against the pallor of his face. Behind him, through the open doorway, gleamed the blue sea that stretched away to France. The little Queen trembled and for a moment feared, as she knelt and kissed his hand. She belonged to the light and motion of the sea and sky without, not to the silent darkness of this gloomy hall, pregnant with the untold story of the future. Charles looked down on the head of tight curls, and perhaps some presentiment, some wave of pity crossed his mind. He lifted her from the floor, and taking her in his arms, kissed her many times. Then, holding her from him, he looked into her bright eyes and let his glance wander over her neat figure. She was overjoyed to find gentleness where she had dreaded formality; she laughed at his appraising stare.

"Sir, I stand upon mine own feet," she cried happily. "I have no help by art and am neither higher nor lower."

She guessed that he found her taller than he expected, for the year had added an inch or more to her stature since his ambassador wooed her for him. She measured herself by his side as they passed into the chamber where dinner was set; she reached just to his shoulder, she proclaimed, and then, she quickly ran ahead and summoned her old nurse to present her to his Majesty.

Charles was delighted with her vivacity and smiled at her youthful vigour, as she ate a hearty meal of pheasant and venison, in spite of the protestations of her Bishop, who reminded her in vain that she should fast on the eve of St. John the Baptist. Charles was not ill-pleased that she should flout her papist confessor. He was well-content that she should bring her nurse to attend her and he thought that by ignoring them, he

could endure the bevy of chattering French hussies who were in her train, but he liked little the large numbers of priests who seemed to confront him wherever he turned. He refused to ponder on the trouble they must inevitably cause, and hastened the departure to Canterbury whence they were to return by water to Whitehall.

In spite of the plague, which had broken out in London with unusual violence that summer, the royal entry was a happy occasion. A thousand boats accompanied them as they sailed up the river in the barges of honour. As they passed the Tower, the cannon thundered out a welcome. A heavy shower had just fallen, but the King and Queen, clad in green suits, stood by the open windows of the royal barge, he acknowledging with gracious bows, she with a friendly wave of her dainty hand, the cheers that rang out from the crowded boats around them. Suddenly one of the boats overbalanced under its load, plunging a hundred worthy citizens into the Thames. Happily, they were rescued without mishap, and the incident only provided further excitement for the apprentices who careered in their small craft in the wake of the royal procession, and for the women and children who leant perilously from the dormer windows of the houses on London Bridge. At Whitehall, the festivities continued, though the inevitable Jeremiahs declared that "the excessive bravery of both sides breeds a surfeit" and that with few exceptions the Queen's train were "poor, pitiful women." In the town, there were bonfires at night, but the rejoicing was marred by the sight of the dead-cart going its rounds in the dusk, while, in narrow byways, men would suddenly stagger and fall, as the dread plague laid its hold upon them.

Autumn came, driving the pestilence from the town with its cleansing winds and refreshing rain. But in the royal apartments at Whitehall all was far from well.

For the promise of the happy hour at Dover had not been fulfilled in the succeeding months. Courteous the

King always was, but assuredly not in love. As time passed, the difficulties of his public life, bound up as they were with his passionate love for Buckingham, left him without energy or will to pay court to his wife or learn to know her better. When he wished for relaxation, he did not turn to Henrietta, but went on progresses where he lost his mental fatigue by tiring his body in the activities he loved on the tennis court and in the chase. In his wife's quarters he only found fresh friction—the priests saw to that! On their very first day at Whitehall, they complained after Mass of the restricted space, hinting that King Charles' duty was to build a private chapel for his Queen. But Charles, always conscious of a false position where his wife's religion was concerned, replied testily that if the Closet were not big enough, there was the Great Chamber, and if that did not suffice, there was the Privy Garden, and beyond that, if required, St. James' Park—an answer not likely to make for harmony. In fact, neither side was prepared to be either tactful or considerate.

Henrietta had brought with her a band of Capuchin priests, who, in their narrow orthodoxy and missionary zeal, were from the point of view of expediency the worst spiritual advisers she could possibly have. Their insolence alike to Charles and to the Queen passed all bounds. They encouraged her to treat the Protestant ceremonies with scant respect. On one scandalous occasion when an eminent Anglican divine was preaching to the court in Charles' absence, Henrietta and her ladies passed through the congregation in the middle of the sermon, and returned without apology, chattering and unabashed. On another evening, when the King and Queen dined together there was trouble over grace. Charles prepared to carve as soon as his chaplain had prayed, but the French Bishop must needs pray also, and did so above a babble of conversation. At the end of the meal also, the priest endeavoured to

drown Dr. Hackett's blessing with his own until the King summoned Henrietta to rise, and withdrew in silent passion. Nothing could wound him more than such unseemly disorder. Nor to the Queen herself were the priests more respectful. Gossip said that they even asked her how often in the night the King had kissed her. Folk had seen her walking barefoot to Tyburn, as a penitence for some small demeanour, and had wondered what the King thought of such indignity. Henrietta herself was miserable, but she could not free herself from the priests' domination, dependent as she was upon them and her ladies for solace and companionship. She saw little of the English ladies of the court. Each Sunday, since they "must have some rendezvous where to meet to show their beauties and braveries, they went to the Duchess of Richmond's and there at Exeter House they heard sermon, and afterwards the Duchess had a cup of wine and some small banquet to entertain the ladies which gave them much content and there was great resort." But the Queen went alone to her own chapel, with only her French waiting-women in attendance.

She did not even understand English. Nor was it merely a question of language; she could not understand the English people. She offended their conventional minds, when she most wished to please. At Christmas she slipped away into the City, playing in her loneliness a game of "Let's Pretend": she was a homely citizen's wife buying presents for her dear ones at Christmas time. She revelled in the lights and colour of the booths in the Exchange and for a short while was thoroughly happy, going nimbly from shop to shop, till a too intent stare warned her that she was recognized, and she hurried away to the seclusion of Hampton Court. But not before she had given the worthy citizens something to shake their heads about, distrustful of a Queen who indulged in escapades!

When the King's coronation took place in February, her confessor would not permit her to be crowned by a Protestant Archbishop, and since Archbishop Abbot would not allow a Catholic to perform the ceremony, perforce she remained uncrowned. It was a sore disappointment for a young girl who loved processions! So she watched the show from a window above the gate at Whitehall while her ladies danced in the room behind her. She thought she was putting a brave face on her disappointment, but the crowd was displeased at the sight of the dancing ladies. It was the same next Shrovetide when the ill-success of wars and parliaments threw a gloom over the land; she tried to cheer a sombre court by one of the masques she had loved since a child! She acted and danced herself back into good-humour and to please her, Lord Holland, Privy Councillor though he was, acted also, and taught mathematics in burlesque to the court porter. But the public shook their heads—a Queen had seldom acted in a masque before—still less a Privy Councillor. Even when she rode in state to a banquet at the Tower, garbing herself in her brightest colours and richest embroidery that she might please her people, unlike the Paris crowd who would have rejoiced in her beauty, these strange solemn Londoners distrusted the display seeming to think that gaiety and a profusion of colour must inevitably be tinged with the lures of the flesh and the devil.

Henrietta was frankly puzzled; her spirits drooped and she became irritable. She was always hot-tempered, as her new subjects soon realized, and some, at least, thought none the worse of her for that, to judge by the relish with which one of them related a certain incident: "The Queen howsoever little of stature is of spirit and vigour it seems of a more than ordinary resolution. With one frown, divers of us being at Whitehall to see her being at dinner and the room somewhat over-heated

with a fire and company, she drove us all out of the chamber. I suppose none but a Queen could have cast such a scowl." What a picture it is of a lonely self-willed young woman finding for the first time in her short existence that life is not all a bed of roses, and as yet too greedy of the joys of the world, too angry at her own disillusion, to make that necessary readjustment of mind and spirit which all must make when the dreams of youth fade before the realities of a difficult world.

Charles' neglect of her began to be varied by unseemly disputes. She annoyed him once by asking demurely, for "two pounds stirling as alms to a poor young French woman," replying to his inquiry as to who the applicant might be: "I, Sire, am the penniless pauper." He was as bad as his people, she thought, for he showed pique where she had expected laughter; she had still to learn that Charles had no sense of humour, that invaluable lubricant against the petty jars of life. Had he been more sympathetic he would have noted and approved the sweetness and modesty of her demeanour and the gentle way she treated her women. On the contrary, it annoyed him that she consorted with them as she did. Occasionally she would go with them to some small rooms at the top of the palace, and there divesting herself of her ill-starred majesty, laugh and romp with them, like the young girl she was. But Charles considered such behaviour indecorous, and requested the French ambassador to "wean her" from "such degrading ceremonies." The French ambassador found his rôle far from easy. There was a worse quarrel in which he was called upon to intervene, over a visit of the Queen's to the Countess of Buckingham. Henrietta's relations with the favourite had been far from happy. He had made no effort to ease her path, and had insolently flaunted his ascendancy over Charles. She felt the more because she had no means of retaliation. Her temper could not evaporate in action; it rankled

and embittered. One day however it flared out, when, in spite of the King's request, she refused to cross a muddy garden to the Countess of Buckingham's apartments. The French ambassador eventually persuaded her to give in, and then, illogically, Charles was angrier still because she had gone. Perhaps at this stage the French ambassador began to hope; this was better than indifference; these last disputes began to savour of lovers' quarrels! For two nights the King and Queen slept apart from each other, but on the third day, Henrietta was summoned to the royal presence, and the two talked long together "apart from all." That night Charles returned to his wife's side.

During the spring that followed, he must have contemplated in silence the plan which he eventually pursued. But, characteristically, he said nothing and acted at length with alarming suddenness. The crisis came, when Henrietta had been in England just over a year. One Monday afternoon at the end of June the King went across to her apartments. He found some Frenchmen dancing and posturing in her presence in a way that seemed to him lacking in respect. He took the Queen by the hand and led her into his own rooms, locking the door behind them. There he told her quietly but firmly, that her attendants, priests, courtiers and women alike, must return to France at once. His secretary, Lord Conway, called the Queen's Bishop out into the Park and acquainted him summarily with the King's decision. The French were to leave Whitehall immediately and to stay at Somerset House till they could sail for France. Then, as they realized the full significance of the order which came to them first as a rumour and then as a royal command with the Yeomen of the Guard to enforce it if required, lamentations and rage broke out in the Queen's quarters, French lamentations and Gallic rage! The women wept and the men stormed, but the Yeomen went on stolidly

with their duty, driving out the unwilling foreigners and locking the doors behind them. As they passed the King's lodgings, some, chancing to look up, saw the Queen, locked in the room like a naughty child, screaming and stamping and breaking the glass windows with her fist. The King, as usual, took refuge in silence.

Next day he went to Somerset House and spoke in kindly fashion to the French, distributing largesse and jewels among them to the value of thousands of pounds. Yet, none the less, it was rumoured that when they set sail, they did not scruple to take with them the major contents of the Queen's wardrobe. On the whole, she was well rid of them and, eventually, when Charles had taken her quietly to Nonesuch, and spent a few days with her in the peace of Surrey, she admitted the fact herself and felt lighter of heart than she had done since Dover. For her old nurse was still to stay with her, and her favourite dresser, and Charles had had the good sense to retain her bakers and cooks! Nor had he disregarded her wishes in the new household which he established, for her dear Lord Holland was to be her steward and among her ladies was the lovely Lucy, Countess of Carlisle, a woman whose quick intelligence responded sympathetically to the Queen's vivacity, and whom she felt she might learn to love.

Another of her ladies was the Duchess of Buckingham and perhaps it was "Fond Kate's" endeavours which at last reconciled the Queen and the favourite, at least so far as surface friendship went. Buckingham's increasing isolation made him thankful for any support; he realized that the Queen could no longer be neglected and, through his good offices, some French priests were readmitted to her presence. But Henrietta knew that they remained on sufferance, and that her brother and her husband were drifting into war. She must choose between her old country and her new, and though at times her heart ached for Paris, she did not hesitate.

For now that Charles was kind to her again she began to love and trust his quiet dignity. She tried hard to learn English and endeavoured to act with decorum that she might please him. But as she wandered in the royal gardens at Greenwich or Hampton Court, or went on stately but lonely progresses through the English countryside, she could not help remembering that she was growing to womanhood, and hoping, when he smiled upon her, that one day her King would fall in love.

CHAPTER IV

SIR JOHN ELIOT

"I pray God the Parliament do well. I am afraid."
—*Contemporary letter.*

ABOUT the time that King James had come to England, a young lad wandered by the banks of the Lynher river as it made its way through the Cornish country down to Plymouth Sound. He was a lively and companionable lad, always ready when mischief was on foot, so that the other boys of St. Germans and Port Eliot looked on him as their leader. Yet he liked to be alone, also, and would slip away from his companions to manœuvre his home-made craft along the creek that gave upon the Tamar estuary, or to lie on the open moorland and watch the plovers wheeling in the sky. As the wind blew over him, it may be that at times he talked to himself, letting the words roll out till the moor swallowed them and the curlews cried an echo, or dropping them quietly as he drifted down the river till his voice sighed as gently as the rippling water. It was a secret pleasure that gave him a strange sense of power and satisfaction.

Sometimes he went with his father into Plymouth, and there he saw the ships riding at anchor in the Sound, their sails emblazoned in the light of the setting sun, the waves crooning about their bows, whence sprang the proud figureheads that had ridden the storms undaunted. Young John Eliot loved the ships, and his heart was filled with the desire to do great deeds, to escape from the security of a Cornish village to the world of adventure and romance to which the ships belonged. But he sighed as he rode with his father homeward.

What key had he with which to open that magic world? Nothing but his own determination, and that strange gifts of words which he practised in secret.

But it was less ambition than an impetuous *joie de vivre*, that made him weave stories of the future, seeing himself at the University, away on travel, then perhaps, like many of his father's friends, a member of Parliament. For so much at least he could hope, and he made in imagination his first Parliamentary speech. And in this happy mood he would swoop out of his solitude, to deck himself in fine array, to feast his friends, to pour out his purse into the lap of the first beggar he met—anything that would serve as an outlet for his buoyant spirits. A certain Mr. Moyle, a serious-minded neighbour, complained to Mr. Richard Eliot of his son's extravagance. John called on Mr. Moyle, and protested, and, fired by his own eloquence, took out his sword and struck his father's friend. But he was as quick to admit himself wrong as he was to express his anger, and his genuine contrition gave even this escapade a happy ending.

In 1607, John Eliot, a lad of fifteen, matriculated at Exeter College, Oxford, where he stayed for three years, finding fresh cause for joy in the new world of learning opened to him. The study of history especially delighted him. This Parliament, then, to which he hoped some day to belong, was no thing of mushroom growth, no unimportant member of the body politic. In Lancastrian times it had been a considerable force in the government of the country, and even in Elizabeth's day Peter Wentworth and a few others had withstood the encroachments of the Crown. According to the news-letters, at that very moment King James himself was learning that he could not attack the privileges of the House of Commons with impunity. Eliot, who had to be enthusiastic about something, found here a satisfying subject for his devotion. The House of Commons! What greatness might

not await it in the unknown future, the body whereby the people might advise the Crown, might criticize the royal ministers if they did amiss, might co-operate with the King in the care of a happy nation—happy because it was at union within itself.

Only one other thing competed in Eliot's mind with this ever-growing admiration of the House of Commons. That was his religion, a deep and sincere emotion, which as yet was rather passive than active, a steadily-burning fire rather than an erratic flame. Of one thing however, he was sure: anything that was akin to Papistry was vile! He had been at the impressionable age of thirteen when news of the Gunpowder Plot had come to Cornwall. His vivid imagination had brooded upon the story, made none the less terrible by rumour, and it burnt into his consciousness an undying hatred of Rome. So, the simpler the church service he attended, the better pleased he was; for the rest, his faith was secure, and he was not disposed to introspection.

After a short study of the law, Eliot went abroad, his life still leading him along the pleasant paths of which he had dreamt. While on his travels, he fell in with another Englishman, a Yorkshire lad whose friendly open ways and striking beauty captivated Eliot, reminding him of a young Apollo, with a radiant life before him. The two made friends, sharing their enthusiasms and promising when they returned to England to keep in touch with one another. The friendly stranger's name was George Villiers—nobody of importance seemed to have heard of him!

Eliot returned to England, married and settled down to the quiet routine of country-life, enlivened by the interest of local politics, and the ships of Plymouth. He became well known and respected. In 1614 he sat in Parliament, though that "addled" session was drab reality after romance. But the visit to London enabled him to meet George Villiers again, no longer an

unknown youth, but a courtier whose triumph was like a fairy tale! Eliot was happy at his friend's success, and there was no sycophancy in his congratulations. But Villiers appreciated his friendship, and looked out for the opportunity of doing the West Countryman a good turn. It came a few years later when a new Vice-Admiral was needed for Devonshire. Eliot, now a knight, was appointed to the post and threw himself into his new work with ardour.

Unfortunately, he soon found himself in trouble through arresting a notorious pirate, Nutt, who turned out to be under the protection of the King's secretary. Villiers, now Duke of Buckingham, was away in Spain, and Eliot, summoned to London for an inquiry, discovered in himself a strain of obstinacy. He had done no wrong, and what was expediency compared with right? To his own amazement he found himself inside the Marshalsea and stayed there until Buckingham's return enabled him to obtain a release. It was his first sight of the inside of a prison, and it was not pleasant. There had been time, too, for some furious thinking, but once at liberty again Eliot was not the man to brood. He returned instead to his first love, the House of Commons, feeling that his place was there rather than in the employ of so uncertain a government.

In James' last Parliament he made his maiden-speech. It was some question of privilege which brought him to his feet, and the members listened, amazed, to the flood of oratory which burst from the lips of this unknown country gentleman. They submitted themselves to the spell of his words, and Eliot felt the blood tingle in his veins, as he knew that he held his audience, and that now, after waiting so long, his dreams were coming true.

When Charles' first Parliament met at Oxford in June 1625, Eliot played the part of mediator between his fellow-members and Buckingham, his former friend. He

found that the favourite, judged in the cool reason of full manhood, had lost the glamour of the gallant comrade of his youthful travels. He was lacking in stamina and intelligence, greedy of power, but foolhardy and reckless in his use of it. The murmurs against him grew, and to save him Charles dissolved the Parliament. Eliot re-turned to Plymouth, disheartened and suspicious.

The problems which the abortive session had raised were, indeed, not easy of solution. The Commons were suspicious of the French alliance, and had set their hearts on the sea-war against Spain. The memory of Tudor exploits stirred their blood, but they could not imagine Buckingham in the rôle of a second Raleigh, and they refused to grant supplies for the war which in 1624, they had demanded. They even, with ungracious parsimony, restricted to one year only their grant of tunnage and poundage which was the keystone of the King's public revenue, and had hitherto been granted for life on a sovereign's accession. Charles was amazed and angry ; he knew much more about foreign policy than did the untrained squires and burgesses who composed the House of Commons. That which he had most at heart was the welfare of his sister Elizabeth of Bohemia. He knew the Palatinate was far more likely to be recovered by an attack upon the Emperor in alliance with France than by a sparkling but barren naval war against Spain. He was right. But the tragic mismanagement of Mansfeldt's expedition, and the religious clauses of the marriage treaty had alienated the sympathy of Parliament and foredoomed the King's policy to failure. Buckingham had not even the strength to be consistent. Swayed by the Commons' emotions and hoping to find himself again the popular idol he had been for a few brief months in 1624, he set himself as soon as Parliament had dispersed, to fit out and launch a costly expedition against Cadiz. He disregarded the fact that there was no money available. The result was disaster; the

expedition was mismanaged by all concerned including Lord Cecil, the commander, whom the wits of the day had nicknamed "Sitstill." The supplies for the fleet were inadequate from the start; sickness soon became rampant and the men pressed as soldiers were of the lowest and most brutal type. When the disgraced ships returned to port in October, these men were let loose upon the countryside. The government, too short of ready money to feed and clothe either them or the wretched sailors, billeted them as best they could on the angry and alarmed civilians of the ports. When rumours came to Whitehall of brutal excesses, of robbery and violence, Charles endeavoured to control the situation by establishing martial law. The citizens of Dover, Portsmouth and the rest, began to murmur about liberty and the laws of the land. Such was the state of affairs when Eliot visited Plymouth in that winter of 1625–6 and saw sights that blotted out for ever the earlier happy memories of the King's friend. He saw the ships return from Cadiz, the men foul with dirt and disease, starving and half-naked, too desperate even to attempt revolt. He heard stories of men unable to march because of their bare and bleeding feet. He heard, from time to time, of some new atrocity, some spate of lust or outburst of brutality, which was soon forgotten among a host of similar occurrences but not before some woman had found a hell on earth, or some quiet family, infected by soldiers billeted upon it, had been rewarded by mortal sickness, that stole away its children and the laughter out of life.

John Eliot saw enough in that winter at Plymouth to sear his soul, and there was no moderation in his burning spirit. This was evil, and he who had caused it was evil and must be destroyed. There was only one answer to the question he asked. The man responsible was Buckingham. From that time Eliot hated the Duke, all the more bitterly in that he had once felt his charm.

When Charles called his second Parliament in 1626, he excluded many who had attacked the favourite by the ingenious though unworthy trick of pricking them for sheriffs. Eliot was allowed to sit. He, thus, found himself unexpectedly a leader in the House of Commons. The force of his sincerity and the vigour of his speech soon made his position unassailable. It was he who called for the Admiralty accounts, and used the knowledge gained as Vice-Admiral of Devon to criticize intelligently. Charles was dismayed, for what business was it of the Commons to criticize? The executive was the affair of the King and the Privy Council—the Commons' business was to grant supplies. So he told them very definitely, as any of his predecessors would have told them. But Eliot boldly declared that they must not merely act when the King commanded, and abstain when he forbade; they must follow quietly the dictates of their own consciences. He did not realize that he was working out a new constitutional theory, and that beyond his personal attack on Buckingham lay the whole question of the responsibility of ministers, he only knew that the good of the country demanded the Duke's removal, and to attain that end he would not falter, say the King what he might. Thus, under Eliot's leadership, Buckingham was impeached. The articles of impeachment were sent up to the House of Lords, and Eliot in his speech before the Upper House denounced the favourite violently, comparing him to Sejanus. Charles declared angrily, "Implicitly he must intend me for Tiberius." The King's wrath, inflamed by genuine anxiety for his friend, made him act foolishly: Eliot was imprisoned for his words. The Commons, with shouts of "Privilege" refused to continue business till he was released, and Charles gave way moodily. Eliot was released, and disregarding the need for tact the King sent a message to the Commons commanding them to proceed with the subsidy bill without delay.

If only he had money, something might be achieved!

All day the Commons debated whether or not to obey the King's message. Should they grant him supplies, or should they insist first on Buckingham's punishment. As the debate went on from early morning until late afternoon, a storm raged without, unparalleled in the memory of living man. Members of the House crowded to the windows to watch in the distance the waves of the Thames, lashed to fury, surging against the gates of York House, the palace of the hated favourite. A whirlpool of wind and rain seemed like an apparition of the devil itself, coming to claim its own; and within the walls of St. Stephen's, Eliot's voice rang out, urging the Commons not to loosen the purse-strings till they had stated clearly the grievances of the country. As the storm died away into the night, candles were brought in, and the Commons, disregarding the orders of their King, quietly continued to discuss and perfect the first of the many remonstrances to which Charles was to be subjected. Two days later, sick at heart he dissolved his Parliament, to save his friend. He had good reason to feel provoked for the Commons had not been generous. How could he repair the grievances of which they complained, without the money they refused to give him? Yet how could they trust the inefficient Buckingham with money to squander upon expeditions that failed? It was a vicious circle. The personal issue was only part of the trouble, though few saw beyond it, as yet. That last debate had been worthy of a stormy setting, for it marked the beginning of open defiance. Men must choose between the ultimate authority of King or Parliament.

It was within a few weeks of the end of his second Parliament that Charles had expelled his wife's French attendants. It was not an act likely to please King Louis. Many other matters annoyed Louis also; there had been for example no alteration in the position of the

English Catholics in spite of the clauses in the marriage treaty. That unsociable and rather irritating young King in England seemed to think the clauses were of no importance. Meanwhile under the same treaty some English ships had been loaned to France. Richelieu, with his tongue in his cheek perhaps, calmly used the ships against the Protestant rebels in La Rochelle. Charles was indignant; his subjects were dismayed. As for any concerted action in Germany, it remained a distant daydream; Richelieu had no intention of financing Buckingham's schemes: he would wait till he could find a Gustavus Adolphus! So, after months of mutual irritation, France and England drifted into a senseless war. Buckingham pictured again a great military venture, and Charles, still desiring to figure as a warlike and victorious King, fell a ready victim to his friend's eager imagination. It is true he had no money for a war, but funds must be raised somehow. A forced loan was imposed upon the country, and no one was more amazed than the King when innumerable gentlemen, who had hitherto been quiet law-abiding folk, refused to pay. They were in the main courteous in their refusal but determined. The judges examined and duly imprisoned them. Eliot for the third time found himself under restraint, on this occasion in the Southwark prison of the Gatehouse. It was not thus that he had planned his life; as he pondered, a strain of bitterness developed in his frank and honest nature. What could a King be like who let this Buckingham rule and ruin his destiny, and England's! Eliot would turn from his bitter thoughts to the consolation of his religion—his Bible and his own communings with God. He had no need of liturgy or surpliced priests to help him. He thought of what he had heard of the King's own practices and of the favour shown to High Church prelates who were little better than Papists, and bitterness came sweeping in again. Every prison in

England had its share of men like Eliot, imprisoned for conscience sake—and thinking.

But Charles took little heed. He never questioned his right to impose the loan ; it seemed to him as natural as any other act of absolute sovereignty, granted the difficult and exceptional circumstances of war. He dismissed the recalcitrants as contumacious, and was as incapable of understanding what lay behind their passive resistance, as they were of understanding his conception of sovereignty.

The expedition to Rhé failed as completely as those of previous years. It was not an inglorious failure, for Buckingham had no lack of courage and the flower of English youth which graced his small army died with intrepidity and without complaint. But he ruined his chances by foolish mistakes in tactics and strategy. With his usual hot-headedness he ignored the advice of his military associates, and pressed on into the island without securing his retreat. He attacked the central fort with dash and determination, but with culpable inattention to detail. Many lives were lost through the shortness of the scaling ladders. When the inevitable retreat came at last it was carried out slowly and reluctantly so that the French were able to obtain complete command of the situation and nearly to exterminate the little company. Buckingham stayed on shore till the last survivor had embarked, but such acts of personal courage, though they make the man less despicable, cannot excuse the arrogance and empty-headed optimism which made him aspire to military glory while entirely ignorant of warfare, just as he presumed to rule a state with neither training nor talent for statecraft.

Yet one can pity him as he realized that once again he had failed miserably. King Louis said sneeringly when the farce of Rhé was finished: " Alack, if I had known my brother of England had longed so much for the Isle of Rhé, I would have sold it him for half the

money it hath cost him." The English prisoners he sent without a ransom as a present to his sister, Henrietta.

However much Charles felt these slights he refused to blame Buckingham and sent the Lord Chamberlain to meet him at Plymouth with a rich jewel that would show the royal regard to be unchanged. While his friend was away the King had "knit himself close to business," but his empty exchequer frustrated his efforts to rule well, and the foreign wars had brought not glory, but discontent and financial commitments that could only be met by the aid of parliamentary subsidies. Small wonder if he were sore and perplexed as the third year of his reign drew to a close. He must either call another Parliament and obtain supplies, or make peace ingloriously with both France and Spain. That his love for Buckingham deepened and his loyalty was strengthened, as disasters abroad and hatred at home encompassed the Duke with a growing menace, should not be counted against the King, fatal as it was for himself and his people. Later in life he was to sacrifice a minister, not so well-loved though more worthy than Buckingham, to the mob's hatred. For that disloyalty posterity and his own conscience condemned him. Let him then, at least, have the credit of standing firm for friendship's sake as he blundered into fresh difficulties, alienated more allegiances, and, impatient and confused, made one more effort at conciliation, by calling a third Parliament in the spring of 1628.

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On the morning of St. Patrick's day, there was stir and excitement in the streets and byways of the ancient city of Westminster. The Parliament men were coming to St. Margaret's to hear the sermon with which the session began. Peers of the realm drove by in their carriages, or sauntered in friendly converse across

the park. The streets were crowded with countrymen, soberly clad. The members' clothes were ill-cut for little could be said of the skill of country tailors; and many were dazed and bewildered by the unaccustomed smells and the bustle of the town. Yet there was a quiet dignity about these strangers that bespoke them gentry; in their own counties, they were men of account and of substance. They passed into the church of St. Margaret with solemn mien and hesitant step, for they knew that difficulties lay ahead, and they were not men that took their duties lightly.

Now, a cheer resounded down the street, and a mob of shouting apprentices escorted Westminster's own burgesses, the worthy grocer and brewer, the *puddings* which the city had chosen in opposition to Sir Robert *Pye*, the royal nominee. There was one young man, not yet nine and twenty, the M.P. for Huntingdon, who slipped into the church quietly and stood towards the back. It was his first Parliament and he was not wont to push himself forward. His name was Oliver Cromwell. Before him were a group of men, who were the unofficial leaders of the Commons. Among them was Eliot, respected by all as an honest man who had suffered for the right, and with him was Sir Edward Coke, a sour and disagreeable old fellow, who could yet be transformed into a patriot by his passionate love of the law of England. Denzil Holles, less intellectual than these, was yet, because of breeding, one of them, for he was an earl's son and these Parliament men respected the claims of birth, united in Holles to energy and "godliness." Two others were there, who, through long years of association at Westminster, had learnt to love each other, attracted by the very diversity of their natures. John Pym, a Somerset man of forty-five, had two qualities wherein he excelled: he worked hard and he saw through to reality. No heart was heavier than his that morning, for he did not share Eliot's belief

that Buckingham was the source of all evil; he knew that behind Buckingham stood the King! Nor did he believe, like Coke, that in merely safeguarding the ancient laws and liberties of England was salvation to be found. There remained behind the laws, the prerogative, whose existence none wished to deny; but if prerogative challenged liberty—what then? John Pym did not know the answer yet; but whatever it might be, he would not shirk the issue!

His friend was a Yorkshireman, Thomas Wentworth by name. He, too, was a man who scorned pretence, thorough in everything he did; but while Pym worshipped liberty, Wentworth worshipped efficiency. He was intensely ambitious, and since his childhood had dreamt of the great things he might accomplish in the service of the King. Order and justice were his watchwords, and disorder and injustice hurt him, as a false note might grate on the ears of a musician. Years before the favourite had slighted him by ordering him to yield to a rival in open court the custody of the Rolls of Yorkshire. His natural impatience and hot temper had broken out in angry words, and his personal hostility to Buckingham had been deepened into more reasonable opposition by the favourite's maladministration. He had refused to pay the loan, bearing himself throughout with a quiet dignity, which made even Charles exclaim, "That Wentworth is an honest gentleman."

He stood brooding now by Pym's side, his tall figure stooping as was its wont, his face dark till some chance word from his friend called forth the sudden smile that was his peculiar charm. But the smile died away again as Bishop Laud stepped into the pulpit.

The preacher, a small figure of abounding vitality, a martinet with great ideals and little patience, a Privy Councillor and Bishop of London elect, chose for his text the words: "Endeavour to keep the unity of spirit in the bond of peace." He exhorted his listeners to

abhor factiousness and to act in seemly humility. It was an earnest discourse, and mirrored the King's hopes that the criticism he must inevitably receive might be tempered with compromise and end in harmony. But the Commons, though they listened respectfully, went their way in silence, and set themselves at once to that examination of grievances which was to evolve eventually into the famous Petition of Right.

This measure of which we learn so glibly in our schooldays appears on closer examination an intricate subject of study, still being illumined by fresh research and involving many obscure legal and constitutional points. For it was not an ordinary act of parliament. It had no precedent and was without later imitation. It was, in brief, " a permanent record " of grievances, the result of three months of argument and expatiation, of compromise and readjustment, not only between King and Parliament, but between Lords and Commons and between differing sections of the Commons itself. One can only show, superficially the different points of view.

Charles' desire for harmony found no echo in the haughty aloofness of his opening speech, a sign, no doubt, of his anxiety, for the more he felt the less could he express himself. Moreover, he considered with a certain amount of justice that he, too, was an aggrieved person, since the Commons, who had cheered him when he first championed a bellicose policy, had failed so lamentably to furnish him with the money essential to success. Going over the four chief points at issue in his mind, he felt himself free from any great blame. Billeting outrages were inevitable if there were no money to keep the men decently fed and contented, and for the lack of money the Commons were responsible. Martial law was a genuine attempt to re-establish order—did his people already distrust him so deeply that they doubted that! The forced loan was an emergency

measure for a desperate situation; even the imprisonments might be excused as an injudicious attempt to secure obedience at a time of crisis. It was a tenable point of view, even if he forgot his favourite's incompetence in the warmth of his own good intentions. He knew himself no tyrant and was ready to confirm his people's ancient laws and liberties, any breach of which he regretted. None the less, as conferences between the Lords and Commons led to a clear expression of the latter's theories of government, a fresh fear assailed him. These Parliament men cared nothing for the divine right of kings, that sacred power, invested now in him and held in trust by him for the son that would one day be his, and his son's son afterwards. He had no right, even if he had the will, to sacrifice for ease or convenience that heritage of kingly authority. So, gradually, Charles' wish to compromise was overshadowed by his anxiety to safeguard his prerogative. Every now and then the first impulse reasserted itself, to give to his actions an impression of inconsistency, when he was only striving to reconcile two irreconcilable desires.

The Commons, for their part, were also dealing with irreconcilable elements. Wentworth and his followers were opportunists, out to re-establish efficiency in the government and to redress definite grievances. They wished to pass a bill declaring the illegality of the four practices in question. But the lawyers in the House preferred a Petition to the Crown which would give them the opportunity of stating fully their theories and the principles involved. Both sections looked to the past for inspiration, the practical men to the Tudor policy, the antiquarians to Lancastrian theories. Neither desired change, regardless of the fact that political and religious circumstances had changed. Innovation in the management of church and state was the bugbear alike of the legalists, who idealized the Middle Ages, and the country gentlemen who sensed out injustice as their

hounds smelt the deer in the chase, but who had little knowledge of how to run the machine of state, and less of foreign affairs and the conduct of war. They were not likely to sympathize with the Government's difficulties, though ruthless and intelligent in their criticism of its mistakes.

Pity, above all, Sir John Coke, one of his Majesty's principal Secretaries of State! On him fell the thankless task of carrying the King's messages, and of scolding and placating the Commons in turn, with an equal lack of tact and graciousness. For three weary months, he received the full fire of the opposition to the Crown, and endeavoured with a stubborn persistency, which at least was praiseworthy, to put his master's point of view before a hostile company. Once only did he escape for a while from Westminster, and then on a busman's holiday, for he was sent down to Portsmouth to supervise the embarkation of a new fleet, and to satisfy, as best he might, the admiral's despairing demands for food and uniforms. Nor was he a superman, that he might hope to succeed in his superhuman tasks. A bureaucrat, whose " cardinal perfection was industry," he had entered public life when well above middle-age, after quiet years among the hills of Derbyshire, and while he had a competent working knowledge of domestic affairs of state, and no great vice beyond covetousness he had neither brains nor vision nor any great moral force to enable him to over-ride the obstacles that faced him. Let it be counted to him for virtue that he stood his ground without flinching and served faithfully when he could not understand!

For the first six weeks of the session, Wentworth was the leader of the House. It had been decided to avoid all mention of Buckingham's name, till the questions of principle had been settled and Eliot respected the decision, effacing himself with a modesty that endeared him to his fellow-members. Once only his fiery spirit

broke out from the unwonted restraint he had set upon it. Secretary Coke had brought news to the King that five subsidies had been granted to the Crown. It was intended to remain a formal motion of supply until the matters in dispute were settled, but Charles took it as an indication of good-feeling and was overjoyed. "By how many voices had the motion been carried?" he asked. Mr. Secretary, who thought that for once he might be facetious, replied, "By but one voice." The King was appalled, and Coke hastily explained that the House, being unanimous, spoke with one voice only. To the embarrassment of the assembled court, the King listened, realized the meaning of the words—that, for once his Commons had agreed to treat him kindly—and wept! Buckingham saw, with pity and true affection, the barrier of kingly reserve crumble away before the wave of relief and longing, which made the King cry like a tired child. Let there be an end of wrangling, even if he, the favourite, were sacrificed on the altar of Peace. With the impulsive kindliness that was his best characteristic, Buckingham knelt before Charles and urged him to give way to the Commons on all the points at issue. Charles, himself again, gave Coke his gracious thanks, and dismissed him. The Secretary returned to Westminster with the royal message, and warming to the unwonted task of saying pleasant things mentioned benignly Buckingham's request. It was an unhappy error. Eliot, leaping up, rebuked the Secretary for intermingling with the King's message, the words of a subject. "They accounted that great man no other than themselves," he declared. "Well spoken, Sir John Eliot!" cried his hearers. Mr. Secretary sat down in silence; indeed, these gentlemen were hard to please!

April, complicated by the Easter holidays, proved itself a month of delays, many royal messages, wearisome debates and numerous conferences with the Lords.

It was the question of arbitrary imprisonment which proved the stumbling-block, for many felt that some such power in times of emergency must be left with the Crown, yet the events of 1627 showed the necessity of preventing its abuse. Wentworth, as usual, desired a practical arrangement that would work, though perhaps he was more unpractical than any in his obstinate dream of a firm but unselfish King. He pressed forward his bill to vindicate "our ancient sober vital liberties" wishing to solve the difficulty by declaring arbitrary imprisonment illegal, and trusting to the King to break the law with impunity if a crisis should demand it. But it happened that, at this stage, Charles' fear for his prerogative was dominant in his mind. He requested the Commons to rest on his royal word, and offered to confirm the ancient charters. "For God's sake why should any hinder them of their liberties?" he cried. But he would not surrender any sovereign power, and declared that there must be no additions nor explanations appended to the Charters. The majority of the Commons felt strongly that candid explanations were essential, and that the King's promise would be too vague to have any significance unless enrolled in a definite record. So Wentworth's bill was dropped, and a Petition of Right was drawn up, in which the theories, developed in innumerable debates, could be incorporated in a document of state.

The Petition was presented to the King on May 28th. There was neither violence nor narrow-mindedness in the manner in which he considered his answer. He wished it to be favourable, both because he longed to please his people, and because the need for supplies was stressed that week by bad news from Germany, where a last gallant band of English volunteers had been forced to an inglorious surrender. First, however, he consulted his judges, as to the powers he would still retain in time of emergency, and then summoned his

Privy Council to discuss and compare with him one or two alternative replies.

It was Whit-Sunday, and outside the Council chamber at Whitehall the sunshine of early summer played in the trees of the Privy Garden, while from the river beyond floated sounds of revelry as holiday parties rowed upstream from London. The Queen and her ladies strolled across the garden, their bright gowns rivalling the flowers that starred the lawns. But all day long Charles and Buckingham, the Lord Keeper Coventry, Treasurer Weston, Cottington, and the rest buried themselves in the cool Council chamber, puzzling over the insoluble problem of their generation, how to reconcile the divine right of kings with the new sovereignty of Parliament, the old doctrine of authority with the new philosophy of an age of commerce, in which government was to be based on contract and consent.

The answer given eventually by Charles was a vague promise to maintain his people's just rights and liberties. It failed to satisfy, not because of its nature, but because of its degree; it was too indefinite. At first, however, the Commons seemed less anxious than the Lords to ask for a fuller reply. They were already on the scent after their old foe. As soon as Charles had answered, Eliot felt that the embargo put upon him had been removed, and the very next day he made a vehement speech upon foreign affairs, moving that a remonstrance should be presented to the King.

"What waste of our provisions, what consumption of our ships, what destruction of our men, have been. Witness the journey to Algiers. Witness that with Mansfeldt! Witness that to Cadiz! Witness the next! Witness that to Rhé! Witness the last! (And I pray God we may never have more such witnesses.) Witness likewise the Palatinate! Witness Denmark! Witness the Turks! Witness the Dunkirkers! Witness All!

What losses we have sustained! How we are impaired in munition, in ships, in men!"

The fierce indictment roused the Commons to cheers, glad to indulge in personalities after the maze of constitutional theory. But when Charles heard, he was dumbfounded. Was this all the consideration he received, for his patient and conciliatory attitude? For six hours the Council debated whether to dissolve Parliament and have done with it. But the need for supplies was too urgent. A message was sent to the Commons, expressly forbidding them to enter upon new business that might cast "an aspersion" upon any of the King's ministers. Then on "that black and doleful Thursday" there followed a remarkable scene, "a spectacle of passions." There were a hundred weeping eyes, while others expressing bold and courageous resolutions drew their swords and waved their hats on high. Eliot began "I am confident no minister—" Finch, the Speaker, stopped him with tears in his eyes. He had been ordered to interrupt any who spoke against the ministers of state. He begged half an hour's leave and hurried to the King to tell him what had occurred. The Commons were left, uneasy and alarmed, for in that passionate scene they had glimpsed for the first time the tragedy that lay before them. For here was no definite grievance to be settled by a compromise or a surrender; but a fundamental question of principle, which might cost the very life's blood of men before it could be solved!

The King was genuinely grieved. Moreover he was frightened for Buckingham. Save him he must, and he had only one more card to play. He would supplement his reply to the Petition with a definite and formal assent. He allowed the Commons to proceed with business, but summoned them to attend him at the House of Lords next day. There he ordered the Petition to be re-read, and then pronounced the formula which had been requested—"Soit droit fait comme est

desirée." "This I am sure is full," he commented, "yet no more than I granted you on my first answer. . . . And I assure you that my maxim is that the people's liberties strengthen the King's prerogative and that the King's prerogative is to defend the people's liberties." And then wearily and somewhat ungraciously he ended —"I have done my part, wherefore if the Parliament have not a happy conclusion the sin is yours, I am free of it." As the King paused, there arose "such an acclamation as made the House ring several times." The crowds without heard the cheers, and a "general joy in all faces spread itself suddenly and broke out into ringing of bells and bonfires miraculous." But the Commons returned to their own House, and after thanking the King, proceeded to finish the remonstrance in which they were embodying their fulminations against Buckingham. Nothing could alter the fact that the favourite must go. Charles' last card had failed. He heard of it, amazed. This was worse than ingratitude. It came near to treason. In a last rather feeble effort at agreement, he announced that on various small points he would accept the Commons' criticisms: but the essential point of Buckingham's domination he ignored, and when the Commons presented their remonstrance, he replied coldly and, turning to the Duke who was beside him, held out his hand for him to kiss. There was nothing more to be done. The subsidy bill had been passed, and the session came to normal end. Charles prorogued Parliament till the autumn and the court moved down to Portsmouth where the summer fleet was setting out to sea. The moment had come for Fate to intervene.

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A few weeks previously a ghastly outrage had indicated how high the temper of the London mob was rising. Buckingham had a somewhat disreputable associate, a certain Dr. Lambe. On his way from the Play-

house one evening, Lambe was mocked by a group of apprentice-lads, who jeered at him and dubbed him the Duke's devil. Lambe was a white-livered wretch, and as he turned into a tavern for supper he engaged some passing sailors to stand guard without. His fear did him no good, for, attracted by the swarthy seamen from Whitechapel, a crowd collected, and had soon worked itself into a passion against the helpless doctor. Every moment he tarried in shelter, the flame of mob-anger flared higher without. When he emerged at last from the cook-shop, hiding by a jaunty step the quaking of his knees, the crowd followed him, jeering and throwing stones. The sailors strove to turn the mob aside and were themselves dispersed. Twice the wretched man took refuge only to be assailed again when he ventured forth, for none dared to keep him long. The crowd each time grew larger and more brutal than before set upon him at last, and bore him to the ground. An eye was beaten out, his flesh was torn, blows rained upon him until, bleeding and unconscious, he was dragged to a nearby prison to die. Such was the penalty of being the Duke's friend.

Yet Buckingham himself was apparently unconcerned. He brushed aside with a laugh the suggestion that he should wear a jacket of steel beneath his tunic. Perhaps he dared not brood upon possibilities, lest he lost the courage which made him a man. So he swaggered, not ungallantly, through the last act of his life, "full of joy and alacrity" though a thousand curses hung above his head.

One morning at Portsmouth he had lain late abed after a restless night. Kate had been urging him to take greater precautions, and he had been irritable and then remorseful. He was breakfasting late, when a rumour came that Rochelle had been relieved. Such a happy consummation to the French War seemed too good to be true. The Huguenot deputies, present with him at

breakfast, would not believe it. The Duke was optimistic. Talking excitedly they came out of the breakfast room into the hall and Buckingham, turning aside, bent to speak to an officer in the doorway. From a dark passage a man sprang forward and plunged a dagger into the Duke's left breast. Buckingham plucked it out himself and with a cry of "Villain!" tottered forward, and fell dead. In her chamber above, the Duchess heard an uproar, and felt the cold hand of fear upon her heart. The door was flung open by her sister-in-law who had witnessed the scene from the gallery. Together they looked down with sickening horror. In the hall, the Duke lay dead, the only still and silent thing in a crowd of frightened folk. They watched them bear the body back into the breakfast room.

Some, who had watched, had noticed that the blow had seemed to come from the place where the Huguenot had stood and, with the quick suspicions of fear, cries of "The Frenchman!" arose. But now a man came forward from the back premises whither he had escaped —a man quiet and unconcerned and anxious only, it seemed, to find his hat. He had no mind to flee, for, as yet, the exalted fury which had nerved him to do the deed had not left him. Now, for a brief while, he was to be hero—or villain—not merely the nonentity, sub-lieutenant Felton, inadequate as a soldier and in arrears with his pay. He boldly confessed himself the assassin, and having recovered his hat, showed his reasons for the deed, fixed in the lining thereof: "That man is cowardly, base, and deserveth not the name of a gentleman or soldier that is not willing to sacrifice his life for the honour of his God, his King, and his country!" It was in the same spirit that the crowds regarded the assassin, as he was brought to London. "Now God bless thee, little Goliath," cried an old dame at Kingston —and, so in triumph he passed. But justice took its slow course, and bereft of the stimulus of popular

applause Felton's courage ebbed, and he perished at last at Tyburn, penitent and abased.

It had been no easy task to break the news of the murder to the King. The messengers arrived as Charles knelt at public prayers and, as he had sent for Buckingham that morning, he thought at first that the Duke was with them. He was surprised that they interrupted him so brusquely. Then their agitated faces and a few whispered words enlightened him. Buckingham had been killed! He looked coldly and quietly at the messengers and motioned them aside. He was at prayers; the service of the Lord must not be interrupted, nay, though the bottom of one's world fell out. The usual morning liturgy continued, and the courtiers, glancing through their fingers at the kneeling figure of their King, saw only his pale, impassive countenance bent upon his hands. They were amazed and scared by the uncanny calm. Surely Charles *did* care! But, when the service was over, the King rose and went to his chamber and there, in a passion of weeping, he bared his heart to sorrow. All day he kept to his room, while in the court without there were comings and goings, secret conferences, hasty despatches, sycophants wondering where favour now would lie, and courtiers endeavouring to appraise their own chances. It was soon obvious, however, that there was to be no new favourite. Charles did not forge personal ties so lightly. He re-appeared next day, and, at once, immersed himself in business. Hard work was the best solace he could find. He talked at first of a great tomb and a public funeral, but his councillors dissuaded him. With feeling at its present height, anything might occur. Charles had no wish to risk unseemly incidents and gave way, without demur. After all it was not necessary. It needed no pomp of funeral array nor effigy of stone to remind him of his friend. He would not forget.

England felt at once the good effects of Buckingham's

removal; for the King had ability, if he would but trust to it, and his two secretaries were hard-working and experienced men. Together they accomplished more in a few weeks than Buckingham in his monopoly of public affairs had achieved in many months. Lord Weston, the Treasurer, had the most difficult task and his surly temper did not make light of it. The treasury was empty for the supplies of the last session had been ear-marked for existing debts. Fortunately, trade was flourishing and the King did not hesitate to levy tunnage and poundage pending a parliamentary grant. Some merchants refused to pay, and their goods were seized so that they talked wildly of the advantages of life in Turkey, but the King did not doubt that, as the control of trade was admittedly a concern of the prerogative, these duties were not included in the loans and impositions forbidden in the Petition of Right. Being determined, however, to be conciliatory at all costs, he spoke with moderation at the opening of the new session of Parliament in January 1629, assuring the Commons that he did not claim the duties as a right, but only asked that they might now be granted to him. It was easy to see that Buckingham was no longer behind the throne; so the members commented approvingly to each other.

But Sir John Eliot expressed no opinion. He felt vaguely that Buckingham's death had baulked the issue. Had the House of Commons the right to criticize the King's ministers? That general principle had lain behind the attack on the favourite, and Eliot had no mind to see it shelved, especially as he suspected tendencies to Roman Catholicism in Weston, the Treasurer. So he remained hostile, and with that strain of obstinacy that underlay, in curious contrast, his vivid personality, he led the House in an attack on ritualistic innovations in religion. The trouble had been brewing for many months, and Mainwaring, the King's High-Church

chaplain, had been impeached, and condemned in the previous session. Charles, however, had ignored the punishment and preferred him to a rich living. The conflict between Arminianism and Puritanism was at its beginning with all that it involved of conflicting political theories and different spiritual conceptions. But it was ungracious to challenge the King's religious position at this moment when he was making genuine efforts at conciliation in the political sphere and for the first time good government appeared to be in sight. To Charles, the Commons' attitude was incomprehensible. He had acceded to the Petition, Buckingham was dead, still they grumbled and withheld the money, which alone would enable him to rule efficiently. They disliked his bishops, and challenged their writings, but what right had they, private gentlemen of England, to control a King's conscience and order his spiritual life! It was factious—and absurd. He had finished with Parliaments. He sent a message to the Commons bidding them adjourn.

Again he had made a tactical error, for the Commons valued their right of self-adjournment and would not be dictated to in the matter. When Eliot rose to speak, Finch, the Speaker, checked him. He had been ordered, he said, to leave the chair, if there were any attempt at debate. It was a foolish statement to make; at once the impetuous Holles with Valentine, a Cheshire gentleman, to aid him sprang to the Speaker's side and held him down, declaring "God's wounds, you shall sit till we please to rise." Eliot then spoke, as the uproar subsided, and asked the Speaker to put to the House three resolutions in which tunnage and poundage and religious innovations were condemned. Finch declared that he could not put the question. Eliot replied that if he persisted in refusal, he would be called to the bar of the House. At this defiance, some dubious members began to slip away. There were cries of

" Close the door ! " and a member nearby pushed it to, and locked it, putting the key in his pocket. A confused debate followed, in which Eliot made some wild asseverations against the Treasurer, taken up with spirit and good courage by Jerome Weston, the latter's son. Meanwhile, the Speaker was in turn persuaded, scolded, cajoled. He was their servant, Eliot argued. " I am not less the King's servant, for being yours," the Speaker answered : " I will not say I will not put the reading of the paper to the Question, but I must say I dare not."

At last, with characteristic impetuosity, Eliot crumpled the paper in his hand and threw it in the fire ! Suddenly, there was a knocking at the door. The King had sent for the serjeant to bring away the mace. The Commons would not part with the sign of their authority, but they let the serjeant go ; they guessed he would return immediately with the Guard and end their session by force, so that anything to be done must be done immediately. It was suggested that Eliot should himself put the resolutions from the Chair ; but he had burnt the paper. Holles reproved him for his rashness, and he accepted the rebuke. Holles took command and, summarizing from memory the contents of Eliot's paper, put the resolutions to the question. The old chapel resounded with the cries of " Aye ! Aye ! " as the door was thrown open and the excited Commons rushed out—not to come that way again for eleven years !

Eliot's parliamentary days were over. He, Holles, and Valentine, were arrested and, after many months' delay, were eventually tried in the Court of King's Bench on a charge of conspiracy. They were heavily fined, and sentenced to imprisonment until they submitted. Valentine remained in prison till the eve of the Short Parliament, while Holles, after keeping himself fit in captivity through a daily exercise of dumb-bells and whip and top, eventually succeeded in obtaining

his freedom. Eliot kept his spirits at first with the help of pen and books; but his highly-strung nature was little fitted for the strain, and the lack of fresh air and exercise broke his health. He appealed to be allowed to go into the country to recover, but his first petition was disallowed as lacking in humility (certainly, it was by no means submissive), and it is doubtful if a later one reached the King. He developed consumption and in 1632 he died. When his son petitioned that the body might be laid to rest in Devonshire, Charles' answer was: "Let Sir John Eliot be buried in that parish wherein he died." So, within the precincts of the Tower he lay, and Charles felt no remorse, regarding him as the destroyer of his friend and the sower of discord in the state. The King had sincerely meant to rule well, and at every turn the Commons had thwarted him. They had been stubborn and unreasonable, and the worst of them all had been this Cornish knight. He deserved his punishment, but nothing could bring Buckingham to life again, and all the bitterness in his heart was poured out upon Eliot.

It was Charles' tragedy that he could never comprehend that as well as the stubbornness there was honesty of purpose, and behind the unreasonableness a burning faith that could, if needs be, make heroes and martyrs of the Commons he despised. Sir John Eliot was dead; the King was content to leave it at that and forget him. But John Pym, Hampden, young Oliver Cromwell, and scores of others who had listened to him and loved him, were not content. They remembered.

CHAPTER V

LORD TREASURER WESTON

"The Lady Mora commends her to you, and tells you she would make more haste did she not stay to accommodate private ends."—*Laud to Wentworth, July* 1634.

TEN years of peace came and went between the stormy ending of Charles' third Parliament and the outbreak of those Scottish troubles which brought to ruin the King and his court. It was a time at first of great difficulty, for the wars abroad had to be ended with as good a grace as possible, and an empty exchequer had somehow to be filled. But it was done—and the years from 1632 to 1635 were the happiest of Charles' life. Then came a change, for the cloud which arose in Scotland and slowly overshadowed the whole island was but one result of an increased resoluteness in Charles' autocratic rule. The secrecy which he maintained about the Scottish troubles, and the fact that one side of him still shrank from the rôle he was endeavouring to fill resulted in an atmosphere of strained nerves and cross-purposes at court, fatal to effective action. Thus came the muddled thinking of 1640, the most disastrous year of Charles' reign. From that year which ended with the meeting of the Long Parliament the tragic march of events swept on to their inevitable close.

It was said of Charles by an acute observer that he was extreme in nothing except in the persistence with which he adhered to his sentiments. Such an opinion may seem to necessitate a reconsideration of the accepted view of Charles as unstable and vacillating. The contradiction, however, is more apparent than real. It was in the realm of the intellect that Charles vacillated;

it was his judgments that were liable to sudden tergiversations. In the realm of the emotions, he was tenacious, with that Scottish obstinacy which appeared in different guise in all his family. Châteauneuf, the French ambassador, described him as liable to give his trust to one person alone, and to be managed by him, forming a good opinion slowly but adhering to it once it had been made.

The tragic circumstances of Strafford's execution have, perhaps, blinded most observers to this essential loyalty in the King's emotional nature; and to Charles himself, his sin on that occasion was a sin against the light, against his best self, which he could only expiate by his own death. It is this juxtaposition of persistence in sentiment, and instability in thought and action which makes his character appear contradictory at times, and puzzled the courtiers and foreign observers of the day to whom he remained in many ways inscrutable. It took him three years to fall in love with his wife, but no sooner had he been bound to her by his growing affection and the birth of children than he surrendered his whole being to her influence, and henceforth in good times as in bad, he yielded to her wishes and respected her opinions, though his wisest counsellors and truest servants might be flouted in consequence. After Buckingham's death, no other man ever obtained a like ascendancy over him, but in the first years after 1629, the Lord Treasurer, Weston, who became Earl of Portland, gradually won that esteem and trust which Charles gave so slowly, but at length whole-heartedly. After his death Archbishop Laud dominated the King, and the second period of purposive autocracy is due to Laud's influence.

Wentworth's accession to the service of the court was already an accomplished fact by 1629. Once Buckingham's death had removed the favourite from the scene, and the Government showed signs of improved efficiency,

this practical idealist saw no reason why he should refuse to serve the King. In December 1628 he became Viscount Wentworth and President of the Council of the North, and when he took up office at York, he made a great speech in which he put forward his political faith with the fervour and optimism of a man on the threshold of great deeds.

"Princes are to be indulgent, nursing fathers to their people," he declared. "The authority of a King is the keystone which closeth up the arch of order and government . . . which once shaken and infirmed, all the frame falls together into a confused heap of foundation and battlement, of strength and beauty." It was to be his happy task, he hoped, to uphold that authority, bestowing on the people under his care the gifts of peace and justice. To a certain extent he fulfilled his task, at first in the north and later in Ireland, and so far as he failed his own personality was largely responsible. For his vigorous and clear judgment and his absolute integrity were marred by "a sour and haughty temper" and a tendency to be affronted and irritated over trifles, which made him a difficult colleague and marred the serenity of his governance. For this reason he won the King's respect but not his love, with the result that he was engaged until 1639, in pro-consular activities instead of being given high office at Whitehall. Had he dominated the King's Council at the centre, as by superiority of brain and will he must have done, if he had been present in a position of authority, the course of events might have been very different. Whether the crisis would merely have come ten years earlier, or whether he would have succeeded like Richelieu in France, in establishing an autocracy that would withstand the shocks of revolt, nobody can say. Wentworth never had the chance until it was too late of carrying out the policy of *Thorough* which he advocated, and the first six years of Charles' personal rule were characterized

by no attempt to establish a tyranny, but by a hand-to-mouth policy in which the only fixed point was the resolve to have nothing more to do with Parliaments, and to which Strafford and Laud scornfully alluded as the policy of "Lady Mora," my Lady of Delays. Its aim was to get money in whatever way was possible, mainly by impositions and monopolies on luxury goods such as tobacco, wine and soap, and to recover the Palatinate for Elizabeth—if it could. But obviously it could not, so that innumerable debates in Council always concluded "with the invariable decision to wait and see" so that one might "very reasonably conclude that this affair" would "finally perish in irresolution."

Against this background of uninspired but not very mischievous administration, the panorama of the court displayed itself under the leadership of the gay and care-free Henrietta, whose frivolous life, like that of her associates, was empty of serious purpose, but was at least free from vice or worse intrigues than those which idleness or love of scandal prompted. The news-writers and foreign residents, having no plots or Parliaments to report, tell instead of the Queen's frivolities—how, one year her masque was suspended "by reason of a soreness which fell into her delicate eyes," how, on another occasion, the festivities were marred by news of the King of Sweden's death at Zutphen, and how another Christmas proved the dullest on record for the Queen was suffering from bile, and Lady Carlisle had lost her appetite. One autumn Charles had a slight attack of smallpox, and refusing to go to bed kept his room in a state of feverish wretchedness, cheered only by Henrietta's devoted nursing. It was to please Charles that Henrietta decided to speak a part in the pastoral that was to be performed on the King's birthday. It would improve her English, and though it was unusual for ladies to do more than dance, she loved acting. So she learnt her lines and spoke them

well, but many were shocked and a cantankerous lawyer, Mr. Prynne, wrote a tract with the grandiloquent title "Histriomastix," in which with much vituperation, he inveighed against the Queen's morals and all things to do with the stage. He lost his ears in the pillory and was imprisoned for life in consequence, but he went on writing in the Tower with unsubdued spirit. Few questioned the justice of his punishment at the time. He had libelled the Queen's honour, and men had lost their lives for doing as much. Charles had been angry but he soon forgot about Prynne. But some of the citizens of London, who had witnessed the scene in the pillory, began to think and talk among themselves.

On the whole, however, it was a decorous court in which an appreciation of art, and a modicum of religious observances were the accepted conventions. If the young Queen revelled to the full in the pageantry of masque and pastoral, and still loved at times to put aside her majesty, and race her barge for a wager on the Thames, one must not forget that eight times in those ten years she underwent the strain of a confinement, bearing her children in good spirit, and making her nursery at St. James' Palace a real centre of happy life. For Charles had fallen in love with his wife. When Buckingham was killed, Henrietta had been away on progress with her household. She, too, was plunged in gloom for Lady Carlisle had the smallpox, and, as the Queen reflected, however one might quarrel with Lucy when she was well, it was unbearable to imagine a world without her or one in which she had lost her radiant beauty. Just as Lady Carlisle began to recover news came of Buckingham's death. Those about her watched the Queen with some curiosity. They could scarcely expect her to be sincerely grieved, when the first shock of horror had been overcome, for here was a rival displaced, and now, at last, she might hope to receive

her due from the King, and the court. But Henrietta, perhaps to her own surprise, could only think of Charles and pity his grief and loneliness. How sad she herself had felt at the mere thought of Lucy's death, but that friendship was as nothing compared to the well-tried devotion of the King's. She hastened to him, completely forgetting herself, perhaps for the first time in her life. Charles was touched by her sweetness, and re-adjusting himself to normal life again, found in her company unexpected solace. Seeing her usual vivacity veiled in tenderness and her quick temper softened into hesitant speech, he turned to her with fresh comprehension and sympathy. The court watched and noted. The news-writers were busy with hints as to what was happening. Archie Armstrong wrote to the Earl of Carlisle that the King and Queen were " at such a degree of kindness as he would imagine him a wooer again and her gladder to receive his caresses than he to make them." But Charles and Henrietta were unconscious of their courtiers' sidelong glances. They were content.

Early in the spring, it was rumoured that the Queen was pregnant. As one would expect, Henrietta found the months of waiting tiresome, and came up to London to share in the celebrations which accompanied the conclusion of a peace with France. One morning in a gallery at Whitehall two dogs began to fight, and as she passed, one of the animals jumped up and pulled her by the gown. The contretemps unnerved her, and soon after a sudden jolt as she was journeying by barge completed the mischief. Her son was born ten weeks too soon, without midwife or physician in attendance. The Queen's life was in danger, and the doctors informed the King that they could save her or the child, but one must be sacrificed. Charles had no hesitation. He could have other children, please God, he answered; he would rather save the mould than the cast. The baby only lived a few hours and Henrietta was very ill,

but Charles was constantly at her bedside and his tenderness gave her courage and helped her to a quick recovery. The disappointment and anxiety bound her and Charles together as no mere good fortune could have done.

A year later on May 29th, 1630, a child was born, who lived. He was christened Charles by Laud the Bishop of London, and it was eventually ordained that nurse, cradle-rocker and all officers in the nursery should be Protestant. Yet the decision marks the end of a brief struggle between the Queen's wishes and the Council's resolve, and it went much against the grain with Charles to go contrary to his wife's desires at such a time! It was not strange, perhaps, that as the joy-bells rang and bonfires burned throughout the country there were some houses whence "came neither man nor child nor wood nor victuals, their doors being shut close all the evening as in a time of general mourning or disconsolation." In these houses lived men of the Presbyterian party who would as lief that the Papist Queen had no offspring so that the Queen of Bohemia's son, a Protestant by birth and breeding, might inherit the throne. But Henrietta contentedly held to her breast the little baby that was hers. He was certainly very ugly, save for those big, dark eyes, that looked about him enquiringly. But "his size and features supply the want of beauty," the Queen wrote happily to an old friend in France; "he is so serious in all that he does that I cannot help deeming him far wiser than myself." His nurses noted that he never clenched his fists and foretold that he would be a prince of great liberality. "He is so fat and so tall that he is taken for a year old, and he is only four months," the Queen reported. "His teeth are already beginning to come." In fact, Henrietta and Charles, like parents in all ages, admitted that he was a marvellous child. A year later, a little girl was born who was christened Mary, and as she grew out of babyhood, Charles rejoiced to find in her that same

grace and lively intelligence which he had loved in his sister, Elizabeth. When the Queen of Bohemia's eldest son came on a visit to his uncle, he fell in love with his little cousin of four, so that when six years later she was betrothed to Prince William of Orange, he refused to attend the wedding-banquet. But Mary was to be more than the wife of a German princeling. Fate had a greater destiny in store for her. The child she bore her husband was, in the course of time, to become King William III of England, and seal the doom of the Stuarts.

Some presage of the future lurked in the trouble that occurred when in October 1633, Henrietta's second son was born, he who one day was to be the ill-starred James II. The Queen had been ill beforehand with a "serious defluxion" on her right side, and Charles in his relief that all was safely over could not gainsay her. So a nurse was chosen for the babe who was a Catholic, and refused the oath of allegiance "whereupon there grew a great noise both in the town and court and the Queen afflicted herself with extream passion upon knowledge of a resolution to change the woman." The nurse was so upset that her milk was affected and the baby prince was sick. The physicians shook their heads and for the sake of peace, matters were left as they were. Thus James, Duke of York, drank in popery at birth. Two years afterwards another little girl was born, and while the "generality" was pleased that it was not another boy, conscious of the dangers of "too many princes of the blood-royal," Charles' happiness was no less than it had been before, and the new child Elizabeth, because of her delicate health and her sweetness, soon made a special place for herself in the affections not only of her parents but of the whole court. And now it seemed as if the darkening clouds of misfortune that were encircling England were threatening even the sovereign's private joy. For Anne, who was

born in March 1637 lived only a few months, and a little later Henrietta had the heartrending experience of bearing a child who lived only long enough to be christened and then died.

Small wonder if the Queen who stood by her husband's side when the clouds broke soon afterwards was a very different woman from the bewildered little French girl of fifteen years before. This new Henrietta was determined and reliant, and with a grasp of essentials such as Charles could never achieve. She had been a happy girl when the King's personal rule began; when the Long Parliament met she had grown up.

Unfortunately, however, her inner nature could not change, and ill rather than good came from the development of her character, because she remained French at heart, logical in mind, hard in spirit and out of sympathy with English compromise, preferring Holland's gallantry to Wentworth's practical force or, at a later stage, Digby's brilliance to Hyde's common-sense. Moreover, her mother was a Medici and a love of intrigue was in her very blood.

At first she exercised no political influence. In the first flush of good resolutions in the year that followed Buckingham's death, the court had been noteworthy for its good order and dignity. Expenses were restricted, especially with regard to allowances for diet, and officers of state were discouraged from bringing their wives to court. On the political side every one walked " within the circle of his charge, and his Majesty's hand was the chief, and in effect the sole directory." But as Henrietta's ascendancy over Charles increased there were changes. Her love of frivolous amusements, as marked as Queen Anne of Denmark's though refined by better taste and some artistic feeling, put an end to Charles' schemes of economy. Her love of witty talk made " the Queen's side " a hotbed of scandal and mischievous gossip, and women " began to have some part in all

business." There were frequent outbursts of irritability between Henrietta's followers and the King's servants. Sometimes, it was nothing worse than two pages engaged in fisticuffs; on other occasions it was more serious. Once, Jerome Weston, the Treasurer's high-spirited son, challenged Lord Holland to a duel, which only the King's authority averted. Political differences had been embittered by personal animosity. And this was typical of the court; personalities rather than principles decided the grouping of forces and various small cliques intersected the main division of the "Queen's side" and her undeclared opponents, so that even the onlooker at the time was at a loss to distinguish between friends and enemies or to ascertain whether personal pique or political intrigue accounted for a new alliance or a thinly veiled hostility. Among the most loyal of the Queen's adherents was her old friend Henry Rich, Lord Holland, a son of the lovely Penelope Devereux by her first ill-starred marriage. She had been the "Stella" who inspired Sir Philip Sidney's verse, and something of her grace and beauty descended to her son. Unfortunately, it was accompanied by no real ability, though Holland steered his way through the politics of the court with comparative popularity and consistency, by means of the lodestar of the Queen's affection. The defence of her interests would spur him to fight a duel or write a despatch with equal readiness, and since the Treasurer slighted her, he opposed the Treasurer, all the more as the latter and his associate Cottington were friends of Spain. Holland knew and loved France and it had been Charles' intention to send him back to Paris as ambassador after the conclusion of peace. But Holland had no money to fit himself out for the post, and another went in his place. The King's own poverty prevented him from easing the financial straits of nobles like Holland and Carlisle who lived sumptuously far beyond their income, and this was one reason why these

gentlemen regarded another Parliament with less distaste than most, in the hope that they would benefit indirectly if the royal exchequer were filled.

James Hay, Earl of Carlisle, unlike Lord Holland, made no pretences to be a politician although he had real ability, and a good deal of shrewd common-sense. He had been one of the Scotsmen who swarmed across the Border in 1603, and he was one of the few who was genuinely liked by the English he invaded. His popularity was, no doubt, due to his frankness. He made no pretence to be other than he was. He declared that business was more vexatious and not more innocent than pleasure, and so as a rule he eschewed it. Yet the few despatches that remain, written while engaged on various missions abroad, shew that he was not only able and quick of wit, but that he possessed the more unusual quality of grasping the true significance of the matters with which he was dealing. Having decided to enjoy life he did so with vigour. " He cared not for money, having no bowels in the point of running in debt or borrowing all he could . . . and spent in a very jovial life about £400,000, left not an acre of land," and died " with as much tranquillity of mind as used to attend a man of more severe exercise of virtue, and as little apprehension of death." It is Clarendon who writes thus, with a note of irony tinged with exasperation. How differently he might have lived himself had he preferred a jovial life to politics. But Carlisle, unlike his younger contemporaries, was never forced by fate to take life seriously. He died just in time, in 1636, while peace and prosperity still seemed to be the lot of his generation. His existence was a series of extravagant jests. His costly apparel and his feasts were famous. He would bid his guests be seated before a cold collation, then, at his word, the feast was snatched away and replaced by hot dishes, more worthy of his friends. Truly, it was a waste of ingenuity, but at

least, Wentworth could never complain that Carlisle was not thorough. He had certainly been thorough in his courtship. He had fallen in love with a daughter of the Earl of Northumberland and refused to be deterred by the father's prohibition of the match. Fortunately for him, Lucy loved him and was as headstrong as himself. Her father was imprisoned at the time, and vowing that he did not like Scotch jigs he kept Lucy with him in the Tower for a while to keep her out of her suitor's company. But as soon as she returned to her mother at Sion House, Hay took a lodging near by and courted her each day, till her parents' patience was worn out and Lucy had her own way, as usual. She was a beautiful girl, whom the court poets loved to rhyme, and in addition to her looks and her Hotspur spirit, she had a quick intelligence, a strong will and a love of intrigue. Gradually, as the bloom of youth faded, she turned her attention from frivolity to politics, and as Countess of Carlisle found to her delight that her power had not waned. Her vivid personality attracted men of very different types, and she enjoyed to the full the rôle, more usual in France than in England, of a woman of affairs. There were always some who could not imagine that a fascinating and lovely woman would be content with politics and these were ready to accredit her with Holland, Wentworth and Pym as lovers in turn. Actually, she seems to have been devoid of strong sex-impulses, appealing to the heads rather than to the hearts of her friends. They regarded her as a woman of good looks and stimulating conversation, who could be relied upon to know a good deal of the ins and outs of the political situation, and to be a loyal friend to those who gave her their confidence. This was Wentworth's opinion, and to him and his memory, at least, she was true, though thereby she was false to her Queen. She was always a better comrade to a man than friend to a woman, and there was never perfect

amity between her and Henrietta. Lucy had great powers of mimicry and when Henrietta laughed at imitations of the French ambassador, an uneasy fear stirred in her that she herself might be the victim, as soon as her back was turned. More than once the Countess had to withdraw from court having offended the Queen's quick temper in some small way. Once orders were given that if she sent a New Year's gift, it was not to be received. But the place was not the same without her, and she soon returned. On one occasion she took no part in the masques, because she herself would not offer to join in and nobody dared to ask her, for fear of being refused. Lord Conway, an affable gentleman who wrote the news to Wentworth, added: "My lady of Carlisle will be respected and observed by her superiors, be feared by those that will make themselves her equal and will not suffer herself to be beloved but of those that are her servants."

They were a proud, northern brood, these Percies! Nor was Lucy their sole representative at court. There was Henry Percy, a wild younger brother, who even succeeded in quarrelling with his urbane relative, the Earl of Carlisle. Algernon, who became Earl of Northumberland in 1632 at the age of thirty, was more serious-minded, "a graceful young man of great sobriety and regularity." To the King this combination of pleasant manners and good morals proved very attractive, and he watched the young man's progress at court with a friendly interest. He approved both his virtue and the dignity with which he bore himself as a great noble. There were not many among the men of his own age, whom he could like and respect. Only three of the younger men at court really won his affectionate regard, and to none could he give the unquestioning love which had been Buckingham's. That friendship had sprung from the potent enthusiasms of youth; these new associations belonged to the less sparkling vintage of

maturity. Young Jack Ashburnham of the Privy Chamber was one of the youths for whom he had a genuine affection; Northumberland was another, and the third was his cousin James Stuart, the Duke of Lennox, a Scot like himself but bred and born in England. That young man, who became Duke of Richmond in 1641, was to prove a most faithful friend and Charles drew very near to his cousin in the last dark years. Already Lennox was an admiring and loyal subordinate, no extremist in politics and popular with all parties, but ready to devote himself and his lands to the service of the royal house to which he was proud to belong. He married in 1637, Mary Villiers, the pretty Moll of whom the Duchess of Buckingham had written to her husband in Spain. It was said that Lennox had fallen a victim to the charms of Lady Carlisle, and that upon her husband's death he wished to marry her, although she was thirty-nine years old, and he only twenty-five! But the King wished otherwise and the flirtation, if such it was, went no further than court gossip. Charles had the joy of seeing his favourite cousin married to Buckingham's daughter. It was one of the last care-free moments of his reign.

Five years earlier the Duke of Lennox's sister had married Jerome Weston, the Treasurer's son, and it was on Lennox's favour that the Treasurer relied on those occasions when his enemies' intrigues seemed to be driving him from favour. He had established his control over the King with difficulty, for at first Charles was jealous of his monopoly of affairs, but by 1632 he was reputed to move "all the wheels of this government" as he pleased, and to hold "the royal heart and will in his hands." Unfortunately, success seemed to sour rather than to mellow him. In his early days as Treasurer, Sir Richard Weston had been computed "a gentleman of serious thoughts and good parts," a skilled and cautious financier, who was likely to advise moderate

policies and carry them through successfully. "He did swim in those troubled and boisterous waters in which the Duke of Buckingham rode as Admiral with a good grace." But after 1628, Weston, as first minister of state, found the undoubted difficulties of his position too great a strain upon him. His reserve developed into surliness and "he lost that temper and serenity of mind he had been before master of," experiencing "not so much joy in what he had as trouble and agony for what he had not." He was in a state of permanent discontent with himself and his job; and in a manner which Clarendon describes as "feminine," he developed the habit of irritating his colleagues and bullying his clients, only to work himself up, when the reaction set in, into a state of nervous and apologetic fright. Thus, in his jealousy of Henrietta, he would go out of his way to be objectionable to her, and would then take pains to discover whether the Queen had commented on his behaviour. As like as not, he would next complain to her of what he had heard, and so work up the scene into a climax of recrimination or reconciliation. He was more like a super-sensitive adolescent than a minister of state! Yet his jagged nerves had some excuse, for he had no easy task to perform and Clarendon's statement that "he took more pains in examining and inquiring into other men's offices than in the discharge of his own" is not a fair accusation, for it was the extravagance of the other men which made his difficulty and he did at least succeed in extricating the King from his extreme poverty of 1629 without too blatant a violation of the laws of the land. He could not, however, escape unpopularity, for though his impositions entailed petty hardships rather than real tyranny they exacerbated his victims, and both their pockets and the royal exchequer suffered through the wasteful method of collecting the taxes by farming them out to rapacious individuals.

Monopolies, in particular, proved an unpopular, though fruitful, source of supply. When the Inns of Court feasted their Majesties at Candlemas in 1634, they introduced a satire on monopolies into their masque and the new Attorney-General, Noy, led the lawyers in laughing at themselves and their ingenuity in inventing new patents. Noy was a one-time Parliament-man, brought over to the court, where his ungainly and unrefined manners made him unique in all but his susceptibility to flattery! One of his patents achieved fame, on account of the resistance it evoked. The housewives of London, conservative then as now, refused to use a new species of soap, for which a monopoly had been granted. They declared that it spoilt the linen, scalded their fingers and wasted in keeping, and a troop of women clamorously petitioned the Lord Mayor that the patent might be cancelled. Either fear or sympathy made him more sympathetic with the petitioners than was seemly in the opinion of the Privy Council, and he was "shrewdly reprimanded." Royal Commissioners were appointed to hold two general washing days at the Guildhall, with the assistance of the Lord Mayor and certain aldermen, and as a result, the new soap was officially declared to be better than the old. The housewives, however, had no intention of changing their opinions, on account of this decision of mere men. Eventually, the King and the lords of the Council came to the conclusion that the new soap had been tampered with by the old company which the monopoly had ousted, and it was discovered that "a small quantity of rhubarb or a glass of sack in a barrel of soap makes it unserviceable," and that this had been the cause of the blisters and the scalds. In such unseemly disputations did the Privy Council of England find itself involved.

The soap dispute outlasted Weston's lifetime but it was typical of many others which chagrined his fretting spirit. Another source of grief was the unpopularity

of the Catholic faith to which his wife and daughter belonged, and from which he himself might have received spiritual solace, could he have avowed it openly. As it was he lived in " outward opulency " and was rewarded in 1633 by the title of Earl of Portland, but his last years were embittered by Laud's growing influence over the King, and the personal charges of corruption levelled against him. It may be that some poison in his body had been responsible for his increasing mental unrest. He was not well and lived as far as possible in retirement. He had lost his appetite, and he was frequently sick, keeping up his strength as best he could upon liquids. It was a cold winter in 1634–5, and the wretched man could not keep warm. He crouched before a great fire, shivering incessantly. His acquaintances saw with dismay that his body had shrunk and the flesh hung loosely on his failing limbs. Yet he still attended to business, until one day a carbuncle developed in his throat and he took to his bed. The King visited him there, but the pain and laboured breathing of his old friend affected Charles so much that his usual reserve failed him and he was forced to withdraw. Next day Portland died, after refusing politely Laud's offer to attend him with the sacrament.

The Treasurer's chief associate was Sir Francis Cottington, who had been Charles' secretary in the days of the Spanish journey, and was now Chancellor of the Exchequer. He became Lord Cottington in 1631. He was a man past middle age. He could remember, in his childhood, those strange, thrilling days when the beacons burnt on English hills and the Spanish Armada drew near to English shores. But as a young man at James' court he had shared in the usual reaction that follows a war, and Spain, henceforth, had been the country of his choice. He was always at Charles' elbow to tempt him to secret intrigues at Madrid with the old futile hope of thereby recovering the Palatinate for the Elector.

From one such embassy he returned in 1631 laden with presents in jewels and money, to find tragedy awaiting him, for a son and daughter had died in his absence. His true self, disclosed to few of his associates in his lifetime, escapes us still to-day. His pose of gravity and formalism, which Laud described as "Spanish tricks," covered him like a cloak. Laud, who called the Treasurer "Lady Mora," dubbed Cottington the Lady Mora's waiting maid, declaring that she "would pace a little faster than her mistress did, but the steps would be as foul." Laud and Wentworth distrusted these two, not entirely because of the policies they advocated, but because they failed to pursue any thorough and consistent scheme of government. All they did was smirched, so their adversaries thought, by intrigue and self-seeking. Laud, being on the spot, felt more personal animosity towards them, especially after Cottington had beguiled Secretary Windebank, "a merry man who told all he knew," from his former allegiance to Laud. Wentworth, away in the north and in Ireland, still dreamed of his ideal-state, writing to his friend of all that might be done, "if only . .". Laud answered in good-natured irony, "You are withal upon so many 'ifs' that by their help you may preserve any man upon ice be it never so slippery. As . . . if the word *thorough* be not left out (as I am certain it is), if we grow not faint . . . if others will do their parts as thoroughly as you promise for yourself and justly conceive of me. But can you tell when these 'ifs' will meet and be brought together?" "Nay," Laud affirmed, as he looked round the court, Wentworth's conceit "of all able and all hearty, and all running one way and none caring for any ends, so the King may be served," was but a branch of Plato's Commonwealth, not likely to be realized outside Utopia.

There were others, at court, who took little part in politics. There was the Lord Keeper, Coventry,

upright, able, reserved, " rather exceedingly liked than passionately loved " ; the Earl Marshal, Arundel, haughty and supercilious who " resorted sometimes to the Court because there only was a greater man than himself, and went thither the seldomer because there was a greater man than himself." The Duke of Newcastle, an aristocrat who was also something of a poet, was in due course appointed tutor to the young Prince of Wales. The Lord Steward, the Earl of Pembroke, another man of culture though also of excesses, died in 1630 " after a full and cheerful supper." His brother the new Earl was Lord Chamberlain, a man whose only talent was an excellent understanding of dogs and horses.

Finally, behind all, little understood and feared more than loved, was the Scotsman, the Marquis of Hamilton, upon whom the King and Queen alike seemed to depend, though nobody else trusted his sinister influence. With him and a few other fellow Scots the King transacted the affairs of the Northern realm.

Hamilton was a descendant, with a somewhat smirched pedigree, of James II of Scotland. His youth had been passed at the English court, and at the age of fourteen he had been married to Mary Feilding, a niece of Buckingham's. There is a portrait of him as he then was, a boy in years, but already hard-visaged, with a sullen look in which insolence and self-distrust are blended. The lank untidy hair, and the sombre depth of his black suit are the more marked by contrast with the crimson stockings and the diamond buckles at his knees. There always seemed to be a like contrast between his high estate and the royal regard for him, and his own intriguing, secretive personality. As he grew to manhood, his aloofness gave him the reputation of being " a born dissembler." Probably, the English courtiers did him less than justice. He was no sycophant and resenting Buckingham's patronage, he withdrew to his Scottish estates upon Charles'

accession and did not return until after the favourite's death. In October 1628, he came back to Whitehall, and the King's whole-hearted welcome of his countryman, the enthusiasm with which he supplied him with clean linen after his long journey and the royal barber to attend him, seemed an ill omen to many who were hoping themselves to step into the dead Duke's shoes. They even said that the King had not been satisfied till he had gone to Hamilton's quarters, and seen him and his lady safely in bed together! As the months passed, folk watched the cautious Scot, who seemed to have no honest mirth nor genuine enthusiasm in his make-up, "screw himself" so far into the King's good opinion "that whosoever undertook the unrivetting of him made him faster in it." Of this, there was soon further proof. In 1630, Hamilton obtained leave to raise a force of volunteers, to serve under him with the King of Sweden in Germany. He was suddenly accused of treason by his enemies, who declared that he meant to use the troops to seize the crown, to which he had a distant claim. Charles heard the rumours unperturbed. He instituted an inquiry that Hamilton's honour might be cleared, and bade the suspected nobleman sleep alone with him in the royal bed-chamber, while the inquiry was in process. Thus, he showed his faith in him; it was a kingly act. But others were as convinced of Hamilton's powers of dissimulation as Charles was of his honesty. The Marquis went to Germany, where he succeeded ill, returning in 1634 to find that Charles, who never disowned a friend because he had failed, was ready to welcome him back on the old terms of intimacy. He was after all, a Scot, and the King understood him, finding his dour ways not unattractive after the superficial courtesy of the southerners. Surprisingly, Hamilton insinuated himself also into the Queen's confidence. Perhaps she was flattered by his seeming respect for her; certainly his preference for intrigue to straight-dealing

was congenial to her nature; probably, she was rather afraid of him. He was more worth her attention than most of the gallant nincompoops who fluttered about her. Whatever the cause, his influence grew steadily. When he had a mind to, he meddled with state affairs considerably; at other times he left them alone. His position was unassailable, alike in the Queen's parlour and the King's bed-chamber.

These, then, were the people among whom Charles went his way during the first comparatively care-free years of his personal rule. The main line of political cleavage between Portland and Cottington, the pro-Spaniards, and Henrietta the Frenchwoman, had many complications. The King seldom acted without the advice of his ministers, and it is small wonder that he was confused by the multitude of varying counsels. His foreign policy was little more than a succession of abortive and unworthy intrigues, which always failed to achieve their end—that of rendering help to the unfortunate Queen of Bohemia, whose husband died in 1632 and who refused with gentle firmness the suggestion that she should come and live in England. Her son, the Prince-Elector, visited his uncle in 1635 and was treated with every kindness, and his young brother, Rupert, turned up unexpectedly soon afterwards, so that the court was afraid that the whole family would come by degrees and take root. The fear proved groundless, but a more troublesome guest arrived a few years later much against the King's wish, though he treated her with courtesy and generosity. This was the Queen-Mother of France, who arrived with a train of 600 persons, and took up her residence at St. James' Palace, alienating the sympathy of those who paid her court by her hauteur and arrogance, and costing her hapless son-in-law £3,000 a month! Amongst this company of welcome and unwelcome relatives, intriguing councillors, courtiers of the "Queen's side" and Scottish attendants Charles lived a life of

curious aloofness. The highest felicity he achieved at Whitehall was among his pictures. If he found someone who could admire and understand, state functions might await his coming, while he displayed his treasures. He was the ideal collector, loving his pictures for their own sake, seeing in them what the artists would have wished him to see, but calm and at peace, not torn by the pangs of creative desire, not wishing to emulate, only to enjoy. He was an intelligent connoisseur and a generous patron. "The Triumph of Cæsar," a fresco painted in the fifteenth century by the Italian artist Mantegna, was bought by the King for Henrietta at the time of his marriage. It can still be seen at Hampton Court, where it charms the visitor to-day as once it delighted Charles by the delicacy of its clear colouring and the vigour of its execution. He rejoiced in the banqueting hall, which his father had built at Whitehall and which is all that is left of the great Stuart palace. It chanced that the artist Rubens came to England as a Spanish agent in the year 1630. He was commissioned to paint the ceiling, which Inigo Jones had designed, and received from the harassed Weston the payment of £3,000! He was feasted by Carlisle and graciously interviewed by the King, and enjoyed his weeks in London so much that, on his departure he drew a pencilled history of "St. George" from whom he had "received so many courtesies." Vandyke also came to England in 1632, and Charles visited him regularly at Blackfriars and even built a special landing-stage outside the painter's house to ease his many visits.

To the eyes of most foreigners, it was a pleasant land this England of three hundred years ago, though there might, at times, be querulous complaints about the climate—the hard March frost of 1635, or the great drought that lasted throughout the spring and summer of 1636, driving the court from London by threats of the Plague and leaving the trees bare of foliage in September.

But, in spite of the weather, it was a prosperous pleasure-loving land, and against its sea-girt security the troubles of a war-rent continent loomed the more darkly by way of contrast. From Whitehall the place whence England was governed—for beyond the royal apartments were the official quarters of all the great officers of state—the foreign visitor could walk by the village of Charing Cross, along the Strand which the great houses of the aristocracy ennobled. Thus, he could enter the city through the malodorous and viceridden liberties, into the narrow streets, where burghers and apprentices, fishwives and street-vendors jostled and gossiped, or at Guildhall and the Exchange transacted the more weighty matters of city governance and trade. These worthy but somewhat headstrong citizens regarded Lambeth and Whitehall with suspicion and distrust, which was stimulated by free discussion in Paul's Walk or in the Halls of Livery and by pamphlets from the pens of the lawyers, who frequented the Inns of Court and seemed by dwelling under the very walls of the city to have caught something of its independent spirit. But there was as yet no flagrant tyranny to transmute talk into action and the men who were one day to be the leaders of discontent were living quiet lives in their country homes to which the foreign visitor seldom came. He might be forgiven for imagining in error that London was England, knowing little of the country that stretched beyond London, wild and untamed in north and west, but elsewhere unravaged by outlawry or civil strife, and repaying the care of sturdy yeomen-farmers by bringing forth harvests in abundance and feeding flocks of sheep, whose wool filled their masters' pockets with good coin of the realm. That wool, spun and woven on cottage looms in the wolds of Yorkshire or on the Cotswold hills, clothed the backs of English gentlefolk not ashamed of good "homespun" and went abroad in ships from Hull, where dour Yorkshiremen

traded with Flanders and the Baltic, and from Bristol, the new and flourishing port that looked towards the west. Bristol sent out in return for cereals, sugar and tobacco from America and the Indies, not only wool and leather but manufactured goods, cutlery from Sheffield, tin from Cornwall or iron wares, smelted by the timber of the weald. From Thames-mouth also, the ships went out with heavy loads to Europe, returning with silks and eastern luxuries and the fruits of the Mediterranean. Norwich, in the east, was the centre of a thriving community, hard-working and of independent outlook, exiled Flemish weavers, French Huguenots, German Lutherans, teaching their crafts to the folk among whom they had settled, buying land, intermarrying, till the new blood and the old was intermingled and the solid East-Anglian stock emerged, working, thinking, and if needs be, taking action. And in a little world of its own, enclosed by the Pennines and the hills of Lancashire, the busy town of Chester dealt with the Irish trade, and welcomed with fitting dignity the Irish lords and English deputies who came and went that way. Around it, the alluvial plain of Cheshire stretched north to the "fair city of Manchester" and harboured quiet families in a little paradise on earth, whose fair timbered houses and churches of simple beauty still stand to-day to bid us pause to remember a gentleness that is gone.

To the country squires of England it was their own corner of the world that mattered most. Memories of their university days lingered in the books on their library shelves, just as treasures of art in gallery or lady's chamber called back to mind the days of travel that had followed. But, in the end, most of them had returned to their fathers' homes, married and settled down, working at their estates and acting as justices of the peace, while their wives cared for the poor of the parish, managed their households, wore down their health in child-bearing,

and by the charm and intelligence to which a score of names testify left a gracious impress upon a tragic age.

Once or twice a year, when the law-courts were sitting or there was private business to transact the squire rode up to town, and there heard the gossip of the court, saw sights in the pillory that saddened or startled him, arranged with a writer of news-letters for a regular correspondence to be sent him and returned to the manor-house which with the village church had dominated his life since babyhood. Only when that church itself was threatened, when religion had become so intermingled with politics that no man could rest unconcerned, did the squire bestir himself to resist. It was the influence of Laud, that resolute and thorough advocate of autocracy, which woke Charles from the apathy of previous years, and in turn roused England to anger and foredoomed her to civil war.

CHAPTER VI

LAUD

"The muck-worm Cottington, the maniac Laud."—Browning's *Strafford.*

ON the ridge of a low Kentish hill, an old church stands beyond an avenue of ancient trees, the manor-house near by and below the glorious expanse of the weald. By a pathway that leads from the churchyard to the park, a hydrangea bush blooms vividly, as if to stress by very contrast the weathered greyness of the stones and the quietness of the old graves, that the grass has nearly covered. Within, that peace which the world cannot give bids the wayfarer pause, while memorials in brass and stone tell the story of the family from the manor-house, who have come hither to worship for generations, from the founder who served his Tudor sovereigns well to the last heir whose name is recorded among those who fell in the Great War. It was one of this family, Sir Robert Filmer, who wrote *De Patriarcha* that gospel of divine hereditary right, studied and revered by the first Stuart kings. Fate has been more kindly than is her wont in ordaining that Filmer's own family should thus example his theories of authority handed down from generation unto generation.

As the wayfarer passes out from the shadows of the past, church-bells are ringing in the plain below. East and west along the ridge, towers of other churches mark the neighbouring villages. In every village there is something old—farm-house, inn, church or castle; for this is southern England, so gentle and gracious that a stranger might deem it decadent, but withal rooted so firmly in the past that they who dwell therein are conscious rather of abiding strength.

The spirit of the place is to be found in the old churches. Their noble structure, the restrained harmony of old glass, the rare carving of rood-screen or altar-rails form a heritage beyond price in these days of machine-made things. As the wayfarer listens to the prayers, which English folk have said for close on four hundred years, the loveliness of arch and timbered roof above combine with the time-hallowed phrases to quieten his spirit, and to send him a message of faith in the everlasting verity of beauty.

There was a time when this heritage was endangered and then it was that King Charles and his servant, Laud, saved it and enriched it by loving care and sacrifice. In spite of the political sagacity of the Tudors and the fine liturgy with which the Tudor bishops had endowed it, the Anglican Church remained a compromise and only roused enthusiasm slowly as all compromises do. In James' reign the more zealous members had tended to drift away, attracted back to the Romanist fold by the certainty of its faith, preached by a revivified priesthood, or feeling out to new ideals of worship and Church government, moulded on the theology of Calvin. Charles and Laud launched their crusade at a time when the Anglican Church was slack and apathetic. They breathed into it a new life. Order and decency were re-established in the conduct of the services, and learned, God-fearing men were presented to vacant livings. All that was possible was done to make the worship of God a seemly and a lovely thing, in which sinful men might lose themselves in Christ. So it came to pass that, when, soon afterwards, folk had to take their stand by King or Parliament, many, who hated tyranny, broke from their former friends to rally in defence of a Church that mattered more to them than any politics. After a King had died in its defence, that Church in the fulness of time, was re-established—to err in persecution, to sink again into apathy, to suffer the dangers of

prosperity and to find in the adversity of modern days, fresh life.

. . . . . .

It was not merely the superficial attractiveness of Laud's policy of ennobling and enriching the external worship of God, which stirred King Charles to enthusiastic support. It is true, that, mentally and emotionally, he was in sympathy with Laud's methods. Decency and order were the defences which his conventional soul put up against the assaults of a bewildering world, and he loved ceremonies for their own sake, as did the pedantic Laud himself. But there was another reason for endeavouring to enforce uniformity of worship. The Puritan clergymen who distrusted surplices, disliked the formal liturgy, and hated to use the sign of the cross with its hint of popery, might possibly have been humoured in small points, and the sermon and extempore prayers with which they fed their flocks might have been disregarded by the authorities. But it seemed to Charles, not without reason, that the disobedience in details must lead inevitably to criticism and disregard of the whole episcopal system, and that these Puritans were "very dangerous and seditious people who would, under pretence of conscience which kept them from submitting to the spiritual jurisdiction, take the first opportunity they could find or make, to disturb or withdraw themselves from their temporal subjection." James' cry at Hampton Court in 1604 struck to the root of the matter "No Bishop, no King." It was the intertwining of politics and religion, the fact that on the one side the High Church bishops preached the supremacy of the prerogative over the law, and that, on the other, those who wished for self-government in the Church must inevitably apply their principles to government in the State, that embittered the relations of Arminians and Puritans and made Laud and the King attempt to coerce when they could not convince.

Yet in spite of this political significance, the work of Laud did represent a spiritual reality. It is true that he was concerned almost entirely with details, the setting up of altar-rails that the chancel might no longer be irreverently used, the placing of the communion-table at the east end, instead of in the body of the church where a chance worshipper might lay his cloak or hat upon it. These and similar matters occupied him, not the discussion of dogma, which he disliked, nor the censorship of the sermons, nor the belief of the clergy and their congregations. The thirty-nine articles and the Creed provided a framework for Anglican theology; within this framework, Laud and his master were willing to allow many shades of opinion, and interpretation. Nor was this a case of stressing non-essentials to the detriment of important things. The Anglican Church, by a certain vagueness as to details of theology, has succeeded in keeping within its fold men of various schools of thought, who have enriched it with their diverse gifts. That which has united them in spirit has been the sacramental system of the Church which to Laud, as to most great Anglicans, was of far greater importance than many doctrinal points. It was for this reason that the Episcopacy mattered so intensely. The London mob might shout for "No Bishops" and see in the arrogance and political unwisdom of certain divines proof of their ungodliness. But to Laud, and to many others, there was something of unsurpassed loveliness in the thought that through the laying on of hands each bishop and the clergy he ordained had, at the consecration, been linked through physical contact with the first apostles and with our Lord himself. The Apostolic Succession was no empty phrase, it was a wonderful symbol of an everlasting truth that the Church was not an ordinary human institution but the living body of Christ. Nor was the communion service only a service of remembrance, it was an experience of spiritual

reinspiration, without which man, inherently sinful, could not hope to achieve the Christian life. The promise of salvation, which the Incarnation had given to the sons of Adam, was repeated each time an individual reverently and humbly partook of the consecrated elements and giving himself to Christ, felt the peace and strength of Christ uphold him. The sacraments, "the outward and visible sign of inward and spiritual grace" were the corner-stone then and now of the Anglican faith, and it was Laud's aim, by strengthening the devotional life of the Church and making its worship a real and beautiful thing, to enable its congregations to grow through prayer and sacrament nearer to the likeness of Christ.

Charles and his archbishop glimpsed their ideal every time they prayed for the good estate of the Catholic Church, "that all who profess and call themselves Christians may . . . hold the faith in unity of spirit, in the bond of peace, and in righteousness of life." But they forgot that unity can only be won through harmony, and strove to impose it through a narrow uniformity. For the men of Laud's time were not to be easily shepherded into any fold save that of their own choice. They were inclined to view life seriously. This thoughtfulness which ran naturally into spiritual channels was fed by the study of the Bible, made possible by the publication of the Authorised Version. Its stately English prose, read by the fireside in every home, and learnt by the children while yet they stumbled through their words became part of the mental food of the people. Strong men meditated on it in the midst of action and women pondered through their months of waiting. No circulating libraries or cheap editions, no cinemas or wireless-sets competed in those days for the nervous attention of over-stimulated intelligences. The cultured household contented itself with its library of history, poetry and the mystics, enjoying the spice of novelty in the ever-increasing number of social and political tracts, but, above all, read

and loved the Bible. Its noble language became the current coin of conversation, and therein men read for themselves the story of Christ and renewed their own faith in the visions of young men and the dreams of old. But alas, as each Christian thus re-examined his own beliefs, he reared in his imagination an edifice of worship, slightly different from that of his neighbours. And struggling to understand the intricacies of the scriptures, Ritualist and Puritan alike missed the first and greatest lesson of all, and followed Christ as best they could in all things save in love to one another. So came tragedy!

To Laud's ideal of "the beauty of holiness" the Puritans opposed the conception of direct communion between God and man. Each individual must work out his own salvation, through spiritual experiences none other could wholly share. Worship could help, sermons could instruct, but the Holy Spirit working in the heart of man, with the aid of the Scriptures and constant private prayer, alone could give the suppliant the sense of being saved. The Anglican Christian realized his union with Christ in God through sacramental grace coming down from above, the Puritan felt himself constrained to follow Christ not because of any external authority, but by reason of the divine sonship of all men united thus in God's service.

At his best, the Puritan was inspired by a quiet faith, which strengthened him for any sacrifice, and gave him humility in times of triumph. His Calvinism taught him to believe that men are saved by faith not works, by a sense of well-being within rather than by external circumstances. Ceremonies, therefore, were only veils between him and the light, excrescences likely to distract the worshipper and deprive him of that sense of one-ness with the Almighty which was salvation. Nor did the Puritan, on achieving this state of grace, feel himself absolved from a duty to his neighbours. His task on

earth was to work for the Kingdom of God, directing others to a like happy certainty of faith, and fighting against the lures of the world, the flesh and the devil. It was a task undertaken with vigour by men, often able and strong-minded, who had won practical experience in local business, and whose political views were coloured by their religious ideals and based on a close study of history, the law, and the Bible.

At first, however, Puritanism was an attitude of mind rather than a political system. Malvolio was taunted as a Puritan though his yellow stockings would have given much offence to Praise-God Barebones fifty years later. The name was loosely applied to all who desired greater simplicity in Church services and who combined a tendency to Sabbatarianism with a distrust of ceremonies and all things that smacked of papistry. Only as Arminianism took hold of the official Anglicanism of the court, and ritualist bishops alone won promotion, did many of these Puritan reformers drift unwillingly into the ranks of the Presbyterians. These latter would have altered the whole character of the State Church, abolishing or restricting the powers of the Episcopacy and modelling Church government on the democratic system of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, whose affairs were settled by an Elected Assembly of Elders. Their dislike of episcopal autocracy was inevitably reflected in a similar hatred of autocracy in the state. In their attacks on the prerogative, they were always ready with cries of "liberty" but of tolerance, the hand-maid of liberty, they had no conception. It was to be left to a third section of Puritanism—the Brownists or Independents—to work out, later, an ideal of religious freedom. It sprung naturally from their solution of the problem of church-government, in which each congregation managed its own affairs. But, as yet, the Independents were a small minority in England, for many had taken refuge in Holland from

Elizabeth's persecution, and returning thence had sailed in 1618 on that great odyssey of faith, the voyage of the Pilgrim Fathers.

Their devotion to public affairs and the sense of spiritual health which radiated through their lives, gave to the best Puritans, of whom John Hampden may well stand as an example, a nobility unsurpassed before or since. No sacrifice was too great for them to offer in the service of their country and their faith, no turn of fortune could destroy their inward serenity. The faults of the "weaker members" are apparent, their intellectual and moral arrogance, their intolerance, and inability to appreciate many forms of beauty, the meanness and sycophancy of the time-servers who later swelled their ranks. The scorn of the Restoration period overwhelmed them, until the pendulum of history swung again, and the Macaulay tradition re-established and idolised them. Let it suffice that in their ranks were men of every calibre and varying moral stature. But the best was very good!

. . . . .

Laud became Archbishop in 1633, upon the death of Abbot, a man of Puritan leanings, who had been entirely out of sympathy with the ritualistic innovations, and whose authority had been impaired by the accident which befell him in King James' reign. When out hunting he had let fly an arrow, which, missing its quarry, had killed a keeper. The Archbishop was technically guilty of manslaughter and neither the royal pardon nor his own saintliness could entirely erase the blot. Laud as Bishop of London had already considerable influence in the Church, though it was others such as Cosin of Durham, who was said to burn an unheard-of number of candles in his cathedral, and Manwaring, who had written politico-religious tracts that declared the King to be above the laws, who had received most hostile attention from the critics in the Commons in

1629, and had none the less been maintained in royal favour.

"My Lord Grace of Canterbury you are very welcome." In these words the King greeted Laud, at his first meeting with him after Abbot's death. Charles had not hesitated in his choice; now, for the first time, he could give reins to his desire, and establish with Laud's aid, the Church of which he dreamed. He regarded the Archbishop as his lieutenant, and it never entered his head that to some his zeal in improving and amending might be perilously near to unwarrantable interference on the part of a sovereign who was supreme governor, but was not supreme head of the Church. Charles' Church was openly Erastian, linked with the state, and controlled by the exercise not so much of the royal prerogative as of the royal personality working through Charles' close sympathy and interest in Laud's work. Each year Laud submitted to the King an account of his province which Charles annotated with such directions as "This must be remedied" and "Put me in mind of this at some convenient time when I am at council and I shall redress it." Thus in religious matters it was possible to obtain some measure of that ideal of "Thorough" which in secular matters the government had so signally failed to achieve.

It ended in catastrophe, partly because of the strength of the opposing ideals of Puritanism, partly because of the character of Laud himself. He was a little man, who had always too much to do. He fretted for the vision he could not attain. He was strained, irritable, over-anxious over many things, impatient and intolerant. His brain was that of a great scholar, his aims those of a great statesman and churchman, his private life pure and untinged with self-seeking, his spiritual life devout, his affections deep. But his mental outlook remained that of the Oxford don. He had been a strict but excellent President of John's,

and the obedience over trifles which he had exacted from the undergraduates he expected from the world at large. He had no leisure for compliments, "believing that innocence of heart and integrity of manners was a guard strong enough to secure any man in his voyage through the world." Even when his temper was not aroused, he would alienate men by brusqueness of speech and sharpness of retort. He lacked the gracious courtesy, the wide humanity and quiet kindliness of the true Christian. Having "more irons in the fire at once than could well be hammer'd in one forge" he could not give to individuals the patient sympathy which alone could win them, and many an alteration in Church practice or in details of parish government that might have been accomplished without friction with care and tact, were left to subordinates to enforce, and feelings were exacerbated before any questions of principle were involved.

And yet the Laud who reveals himself in the diary and the letters to Wentworth is no mere ill-tempered martinet. The letters are lit with gleams of humour, the diary sweetened by a simple faith which show the man as he might have been had he not been doomed to grapple with a task beyond the powers of any individual. At heart he was a good man. Seven times a day, however overwhelmed with business he might be, he paused to commune with his God, withdrawing for a short space of time to his devotions. The fortitude with which he faced adversity, bearing in old age without complaint four years' imprisonment that ended only with the scaffold, proclaimed his true character. But in the everyday affairs of life externals count for as much as the inner man, and Laud, who persecuted men for refusing to observe the ceremonies of the Church, disregarded the ceremonies of society and in his precipitancy, his impatience and his arrogant temper, robbed himself of any true friend save Wentworth and the King.

In 1633 when he became Archbishop, Laud himself was conscious of certain forebodings. In a letter to Wentworth he bemoans the probable loss of his health "for instead of all the jolting which I had over the stones between London House at Fulham and Whitehall which was almost daily, I shall now have no exercise but slide over in a barge (from Lambeth) to the Court and Star Chamber. And in truth, my lord, I speak seriously. I have had a heaviness hang upon me ever since I was nominated to this place and I can give myself no account of it unless it proceed from an apprehension that there is more expected of me than the craziness of these times will give me leave to do."

But he did not pause long. The amount he accomplished in the next few years was enormous. His first large undertaking was a general visitation of his province, and the defects then discovered in the mental and moral calibre of the ministry, the manner of worship and the material state of the churches were remedied with as much speed and thoroughness as was humanly possible. Such vexed questions as the position of the communion table, and the practice of bowing at the name of Jesus, were only aspects of a thorough re-organization. In enforcing his ends, Laud employed the Tudor ecclesiastical Court of High Commission, and the use he made of this and the Star Chamber Court, in punishing delinquents and in preventing the free expression of opinion, was largely responsible for the load of obloquy under which he and his master laboured. One of Charles' greatest wishes was to improve the moral tone of his nobility, and Laud did not hesitate to summon the greatest in the land to answer in the Commission Court for some laxity or suspected immorality. Nobles and clergy, thus held up to public contumely, did not appreciate these efforts to reform their characters. And when the next victim was an over-conscientious Justice of the Peace, whose only crime lay in prohibiting some wake or fair

that smacked to him of heathen practices, he felt himself insulted as well as injured in thus being coupled with licentious lords and unworthy pastors. So all classes combined in hating the prerogative courts.

There were few matters which caused more difficulty than this of the fairs and the old-time pastimes, which the Puritan condemned in his distrust of all things not expressly warranted by scripture. Charles had no patience with those who saw the devil lurking behind the maypole, and the steps of the morris dancers treading the way to hell. He was encouraged by Laud to reissue his father's *Book of Sports*, which ordained that after attending divine worship on Sunday folk might enjoy whatever games they wished. James had left it at that, but Charles, who was strangely irresponsive to the troubled heart of his people, and irritated when he should have soothed, ordered the declaration to be read on a fixed date from every pulpit in the land. The Puritans, who regarded Sunday as the Jewish Sabbath, thought uneasily of the fourth commandment. Many a vicar found himself faced with the alternative of disobeying the King or bidding his congregation act contrary to the scriptures. One minister found escape from his quandary by reading the declaration as commanded, " and presently after, read the ten commandments, then said, ' Dearly beloved, you have heard now the commandments of God and man. Obey which you please.' " Such verbal virtuosity might relieve the speaker's feelings for the moment, but it only added bitterness to the burden of those who, for the present, said nought. And yet, in this as in so much else, there can be little doubt that the balance of wisdom and truth was on the side of the King. The happy life of the English countryside, with its dancing, and football up and down the village street, the gay barter of the fairs, and the merriment of the wakes, was to a large extent lost for ever in the troubles of mid-century. The *Book of Sports* was

an honest effort to retain much that was good; it was not Charles judgment of essentials that was at fault, though one with greater skill in managing men might have refrained from rousing opposition by stressing the point at issue.

He had like cause to feel himself hard used in another scheme, upon which he and Laud embarked with vigour —the rebuilding of St. Paul's. Charles was enthusiastic and added a magnificent portico to the finished building, going in state to re-open the cathedral. But the Londoners grumbled at the dues levied upon them and the eventual fate of the portico was to be "broken down with axes and hammers and the whole sacred edifice made not only a den of thieves but a stable of unclean beasts." To the Puritans, the beautiful stonework was idolatrous, to Charles it was an anthem of praise. How could there be other than disaster?

There was one other matter in which without question Charles' tolerance and wisdom exceeded that of his opponents. In his treatment of the Roman Catholics the King was naturally influenced by his love for Henriëtta and his sympathy with her beliefs. Together they had laid the corner-stone of a new chapel at Somerset House for the Capuchin priests she was allowed to receive into England. He received with courtesy the envoy whom the Pope sent to the Queen, and delighted in discussing points of dogma with him. For he had no fear of Catholic activity, knowing that his Catholic subjects were loyal and honest folk, nor had he any fear of succumbing to the envoy's arguments for "no gentleman in his three nations . . . better understood the foundations of his own Church than he did." Of his own faith he was confident, and Signor Panzani who had come to England dreaming that the King might be converted, soon realized his mistake. His successor, a Scotsman, Signor Con, turned his attention from the King to the more pliable courtiers and there was a rather

alarming crop of conversions among ladies of high rank, which perturbed even Laud, but which Charles was inclined to take lightly, bearing in mind the mental calibre of the converts. The most he would do was to issue a mild and paternal proclamation admonishing the Catholics in England to behave themselves and obey the laws. The great mass of Protestants were genuinely alarmed. The rumours they heard of goings-on at court were grossly exaggerated, and they were afraid. Fear, the cause of most cruelty in life, made them intolerant and unjust, just as lack of fear enabled Charles to attain more closely than most to the idea of toleration.

But there was no tolerance in the King's heart to the Puritans, for instinctively he feared their attitude not only to religion but to politics and all life. So he made no attempt to resist or lessen the increasingly severe Star Chamber sentences against any who, by speech or writing, had libelled the government or expressed too openly the Puritan ideal. After 1635 as Laud became increasingly involved in political affairs, his own temper and that of his associates grew irritable and the effects of frayed nerves were apparent in punishments and petty tyrannies which roused unquenchable passion in the country without silencing the offenders. Charles, by nature severe though not cruel, prided himself that his rule was not marred by the death sentence upon political offenders, and if his conscience ever questioned the Star Chamber judgments it was in all likelihood satisfied by the fact that formally they were correct; the punishments did not exceed those which might be inflicted upon "seditious libellers." But the wider mercy that springs from genuine sympathy with the sufferer could find no root in his self-centred nature, and Charles must bear the blame for what his ministers did by his authority in Council, and for lacking entirely that fatherly affection for his people, which would forgive their faults and

understand their difficulties, and which alone might have justified that theory of patriarchal kingship upon which he based his autocratic rule.

So, in spite of much prosperity in England, of the blessings of peace, a mild administration, and the inception of such excellent measures as the draining of the Fens and the establishment of a postal system, the names of Leighton and Lilburne, of Prynne, Burton and Bastwicke, even of poor Archie Armstrong, the fool, who was turned out of court and his shirt pulled over his head, because of his punning cry "All praise to God and little Laud to the devil," testify to the ruthless severity of "Thorough." Men's minds were seared with the memory of hideous things. When *Prynne first stood in the pillory and lost his ears,* few squandered pity on the sour-faced lawyer, for his tract "Histriomastix." But when in 1637 Prynne stood in the pillory again, with Dr. Burton, the divine, and Dr. Bastwicke, the physician, to bear him company, the case was different. In sermon and tract, the three had expressed themselves with violence and ill taste, but their hatred of episcopacy was shared by most of the onlookers to whom they appeared as martyrs, as they exhorted those about them to stand firm for the truth, and themselves with quiet fortitude prepared to face their executioners. Their ears were hewn off, and Prynne in addition was branded with the letters S.L. for seditious libeller, which he proudly declared should stand for the scars of Laud—*stigmata Laudi.* Dame Bastwicke had gone with her husband to the very foot of the pillory, while Dame Burton declared that she had not been so proud and happy since her wedding day. In the same strain of suffering glorified, cheering crowds accompanied the three men when they set out to the distant castles where they had been doomed to life-long imprisonment. But Laud was only angry that the offenders had been allowed to talk in the pillory, while

to Charles they were intransigeants who must be kept from communion with the world which they would assuredly defile! A few months later John Lilburne was whipped through the streets from the Fleet Prison to Palace Yard, for refusing to take the Star Chamber oath, to answer all questions put to him in that court. It was a glorious defiance of tyranny that stirred the heart of England.

The activity of the Star Chamber in 1637 was paralleled in other spheres of government. Since the Treasurer's death in 1635 the *tempo* of events had quickened. The King seemed to have cast off the lethargy which had frequently enveloped him in earlier years. He still acted with too much hesitation and circumspection to be an efficient autocrat, but none the less he appeared to the onlooker to be shaping his rule definitely towards that end, and in the political as well as the religious sphere to be aiming at the goal of "absolute royalty." At the time of Portland's death, Cottington's influence was still too strong for Lady Mora to be ousted immediately. It was one of the most critical moments of Charles' reign. Many eyes were turned towards Ireland where Wentworth was proving himself a firm if litigious ruler. Would he be summoned home, and as Treasurer be given the opportunity to put his dreams into practice, and make efficiency synonymous with autocracy? Charles could not realize how much depended on his decision, and being what he was, personal considerations weighed with him as much as public ones, his liking for Cottington who hated Wentworth, the whispered counsels of Hamilton, his intuitive shrinking from the domination of a strong character. So he did not send to Ireland; he procrastinated by putting the Treasury in commission. He was signing his own death-warrant, for when Wentworth, the only man of genius in the King's service, came home in 1640 it was too late to save Charles.

Archbishop Laud was one of the Treasury commissioners, and with his help Charles plunged himself into political work "taking a constant account" of his finances and seeing "what had been of late done amiss." When, in due time, the office of Treasurer was given to the saintly Bishop of London, William Juxon, one who had "the good opinion of every one, whom all factions united to praise," it was felt none the less, that his formal control was only a cloak under which Laud's influence could be continued. Charles, in fact, was trusting to his bishops in all branches of government, and those who hated the bishops bade each other watch for the result.

The results came in the Star Chamber punishment, the fatal intervention in Scotland, of which, at first, little was known, and in the imposition of ship money, which had been initiated upon the suggestion of Noy in 1634 and had been then paid by the English ports without much grumbling. It was understood that with the money obtained a fleet was to be fitted out against the pirates who infested the coasts. In 1635 the tax was re-imposed, and then extended to inland towns. People grew anxious. Here was a way by which the King could raise regular supplies. No one could challenge his right to demand money for the defence of the realm, but was this money to be used primarily for defence? Why was it re-imposed, and ought the inland towns to pay for ships to defend the fishing fleet? There were many pros and cons to the matter. Charles opened the door to trouble by himself making lengthy inquiries as to his rights, by trying to persuade leading men to contribute by "suave and pleasant argument," and by prosecuting John Hampden who refused to pay, in the hope of obtaining a legal decision in the royal favour. In 1637 Charles obtained a favourable decision against Hampden in the Exchequer court, by seven votes to five, but the disagreement among the judges and

arguments put forward on Hampden's side gave the people what they had hitherto lacked—reasonable grounds for an opposition which had been instinctive. Throughout, too much talking was permitted, nay encouraged, about ship money, and Charles by his over-conscientiousness advertised the weakness of his case.

It was small wonder that Laud's irritation grew and that unseemly quarrels marred the serenity of the council chamber. Even Charles was annoyed at times by the officious behaviour of the Archbishop. There was a wall to be built round the new park that Charles had enclosed at Richmond. It would cost many thousand pounds and Laud declared there was no money to be spared for such details, and he marvelled that any had encouraged the King in such an idea. Cottington replied coolly, that it was no business of theirs to discuss the King's pleasure but to see it was satisfied. Laud anathematized him with unclerical vigour, and Charles was displeased. "Laud could not debate anything," writes Clarendon," without some commotion when the argument was not of moment, nor bear contradiction in debate. Lord Cottington being a master of temper and of the most profound dissimulation, knew too well how to lead him into a mistake, and then drive him into choler, and then expose him upon the matter and the manner to the judgment of the company . . . and he chose to do this most when the King was present, and then he would dine with him next day."

Laud went on his lonely way unflinching ; if at times ill-tempered he knew he must succeed or perish. There was an air of tension at court. The care-free Carlisle had died. His countess was writing to Wentworth and losing patience with the Queen's empty-headedness. Young Northumberland had been made admiral of the new " ship money " fleet, and was profuse in his thanks, but he had time to think when at sea, and, when he came

home, liked the court less than ever. Holland was still Henrietta's friend, but he was finding life difficult; his elder brother, the Earl of Warwick, had no use for the new spirit in the government. One day in the King's presence he broke into a tirade against ship money and all it stood for, and went on for as long as the King would listen. And Charles did listen, in silence, smiling and composed. He said nothing.

He was quiet, partly, because he had no conception of the deep feeling pulsating through the country. A year or two earlier there had been a great parade of the military companies of the City of London. Charles dined at Bradborne's "the most remarkable silkman of Cheapside," and the companies assembled in Smithfield, marched past him along Cheapside and so into Moorfields where by ill-fortune a barrel of gunpowder was fired and forty were injured and five or six slain. But Charles did not believe in bad omens, and had one told him that a few years later these very companies would rob him of his kingdom, he would have smiled and said nothing. He could not imagine any such catastrophe.

After all England seemed in a happy state. It was inevitable that Royalists, remembering in later years the peaceful time before the troubles in Scotland set a match to the smouldering discontent, should look through rose-coloured spectacles at this England that was no more. Yet Warwick[1] and Clarendon had both sufficient regard to truth not to exaggerate intentionally. Warwick is eulogistic. "In this King's reign in city and country every man sat quiet under his own vine and the fountains of justice . . . were clear and current. . . . The public charges were light. Trade ran so high that the credit of English merchants on every bourse or exchange in Christendom exceeded any nation in Christendom and

[1]Sir Philip Warwick, Secretary to Charles. Not to be confused with the Earl of Warwick mentioned above.

our manufactures increased daily. . . . The learning of the divines and their grave and sober conversation was very eminent. . . ."

And Clarendon takes up the tale in his sonorous periods: "from the dissolution of the Parliament in the fourth year to the beginning of this (Long) Parliament which was above twelve years, this kingdom . . . enjoyed the greatest calm and the fullest measure of felicity that any people in any age for so long together have been blessed with; to the wonder and envy of all the parts of Christendom."

But he concludes, "all these blessings could but enable—not compel us to be happy. There was in truth a strange absence of understanding in most and a strange perverseness of understanding in the rest: the court full of excess, idleness and luxury and the country full of pride, mutiny and discontent." It was not material hardship, but a spiritual revolt that stirred the squires of East Anglia as well as the citizens of London to an unrest of mind which needed but the chance of expression.

The King's growing resolve to make himself absolute gave the malcontents their chance. So long as times were quiet his finances were now adequate, but there was no margin. The troubles in Scotland led to civil strife and the necessity of raising forces, and thus made it impossible to continue without a Parliament. It was the unsatisfactory way in which Charles handled the Scottish troubles that sealed his fate. With regard to Scotland he was his own first minister, and now for the first time in the political story, he is the central figure, failing because of his own faults. As a child, his brother's brilliance and his sister's charm, as a youth, his father's shrewdness and Buckingham's magnificence, had hidden the real Charles behind their more vivid personalities. When he became King, his virtues of sobriety, modesty, intelligence, good taste, his good

intentions and the absence of all vices evoked admiration but failed to win the love which a more erring but more sympathetic disposition might have won. His Queen's gay frolics and the "pomp and circumstance" of court life found him kind and dignified, a fitting figure-head in formal ceremonies, prepared to dance at the masque, or grace the splendid proceedings of the Order of the Garter. But he never laid aside the cloak of formality which still served to keep the real Charles hidden. Nor was it the reserve of a strong man. There was a weak trait in his character, due partly to the environment of his youth, but due no doubt, largely to heredity, for one should not forget that Charles was Darnley's grandson. This weakness of grasp is mentioned by contemporaries who speak of his "natural indolence," and refer to "the defect of his character rendered very obstinate after so long a time and inducing in him the utmost languor." It was partly physical. His physique was slight, though well-proportioned, and that defect of speech which had agitated his father in his babyhood still remained to a certain extent, so that he never talked with ease. Superficially, he was robust, yet some residue of childish delicacy may have remained to keep him languorous and lacking in energy and will. It is to his credit that just as he had overcome his childish weakness by determined open-air exercise, so he endeavoured to conquer his mental apathy, and eventually succeeded, by hard work in the council-chamber and in conclave with law-officers and ministers of state. In the first years of his reign he was said to avoid all arduous and difficult business, but later no one could accuse him of laziness. It might have been better had he meddled less. He was neither weak nor strong enough to leave the work of government to competent ministers. He relied largely upon his council, and yet in his secretive way he might act suddenly upon his own initiative. Once when a discussion in Council had failed to evolve

a satisfactory answer to an ambassador's despatch, Charles retired to his cabinet, spent two hours writing there; then bade his secretary take his letter direct to the ambassador in Germany without a word to the lords of the Council. It was these sudden gusts of secret action which caused such mischief in the days before the Civil War. It was as if Charles could not bear to think himself weak and challenged fate to find him so.

He had not, however, any deep interest in political work, and was devoid of all real skill in state-craft. He was happiest in the country, and he would hurry away with the Queen to Hampton Court and thence into Surrey, where he would enjoy a few quiet days with his wife or indulge his passion for the chase, regardless of the fact that embassies might be kept waiting and business of state be put out of gear. Here is the true man at last. Once on horseback, all sense of inferiority vanished; he knew that no one in the kingdom rode better than he. Here was a thing he could do well, and it was good. When his hand was on the rein there was no hesitation, no indecision, no seeking for advice; now he knew what to do and he did it with vigour. For this he cared passionately! Once when hunting in the New Forest he plunged into a bog and nearly lost his life. His horse was drowned, and the King sank to his neck, before he could be rescued. He was undismayed, and changing clothes with the first person he met he mounted a new horse and continued the hunt. This was bravery and coolness worthy of a King. And yet another, surely, would have shown more grief at the loss of his horse. Did Charles feel the horror of that death? The records do not tell us. It may be that then, as at so many other times, lack of imagination made him less than noble.

By 1638 Charles Stuart the man, who felt few things deeply, who found safety in silence and relied upon wife and friend, had been forced out of the shadow into the forefront of the scene. He was King of England,

and must be responsible for the things enacted there. He had associated himself with "Thorough" in the government of the Church, and roused such hatred thereby that if his throne was to be safe he must perforce link himself with the same policy in affairs of state. Events were preparing which would make it impossible for him to maintain any longer his pose of aloofness. As man and king, he must face his destiny. Laud, so it seemed, had disciplined England, but the hills of Scotland harboured forces which he could not tame. Nemesis was at hand; the peace of the kingdom was to be rent asunder and the prosperous years of plenty end in civil warfare. In that sad struggle, many were to lose their lives and some were to find their souls. In the sin of Strafford's betrayal, in the loyalty of the Cavaliers, in his own deepening love of the Church for which he died, Charles was to learn the meaning of passion and of sacrifice, and despising his own weakness was to win salvation.

CHAPTER VII

THE SCOTS

" From the Turk, the Pope, and the Scottish nation,
Libera nos, Domine."—*Contemporary ballad.*

TO the end of his days, King Charles spoke with a Scottish accent. His best friends in middle life were the Scotsmen Lennox and Hamilton. In his bedchamber he employed seven Scottish grooms to one English, and as many Scots as English gentlemen. Those who disliked this northern brood said that when the King slept they searched his pockets, and that " as far as they could find his meaning by words, by signs and circumstances or the silent language of a shrug it was posted presently into Scotland." If the Scots showed their distrust of the English by some such form of petty espionage, the English in the main showed their scorn of the Scots by ignoring the existence of Scotland. " When the whole nation was solicitous to know what passed weekly in Germany and Poland and all other parts of Europe, no man ever inquired what was doing in Scotland, nor had that kingdom a place or mention in one page of any gazette." Scottish affairs were never debated by the Privy Council of England (this abstinence remained the constitutional practice after the Restoration), but Charles had his own secretary of state for Scotland, and managed its affairs himself with the aid of the leading Scotsmen at court, dominated by the inscrutable Hamilton. Lennox never forgot that he was a Scots noble as well as King Charles' subject and showed particular moderation and caution in his attitude to all Scottish questions. Charles, on the other hand, in spite of his sentimental attachment to the land of his birth, had no such intuitive appreciation of his countrymen's

point of view. He blundered sadly, tried in vain to extricate himself from his difficulties by alternate threats and cajolery, and though the crisis in Scotland first arose in the summer of 1637, it was not till December 1638 that the English Council was informed of what had happened, and realized too late that war was imminent.

The trouble was, of course, religion. James had respected the force of Scottish Presbyterianism, much as he detested it, and the bishops he appointed remained mere figure-heads. Charles, not only increased their powers, but entrusted to them a great deal of the secular administration of the country. The nobles, always unruly and suspicious, were angry and alarmed. Then, in 1637, Charles endeavoured to impose a liturgy upon the Scottish Church. This aroused the passionate opposition of the people. Thus all classes were united in a revolt that was half religious and half national. In England Charles might deem himself a Scot, in Scotland he was suspect as King of England. Scotland as a nation demanded the abolition of episcopacy: Charles' conscience would not allow him to consent. The result was stalemate—and the so-called Bishops' Wars.

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For thirty years, Charles had never been to Scotland. His own uncertain health, wars and rumours of wars, the upheaval of Buckingham's murder, the business of government, and the birth of his first children had in turn postponed the visit. At last, in 1633, he set out to be crowned in his native land, and as if to silence reproaches for his tardiness he rode accompanied by a great train, parading all the pomp of royalty, save when the glades of Sherwood called him to the pleasures of the chase. The nobility of the midlands and the north, perhaps remembering occasions when the southern gentry had mocked at northern ways, replied with a like show of luxury. The King, the lords of his Council and the gentlemen of his bedchamber, his household officials,

the keeper of his privy purse, his ushers and pensioners of the guard, his bishops and chaplains, his surgeons, barber and apothecary, his cupbearers, carvers and sewers were all welcomed and feasted, in a manner that had seldom been equalled and never surpassed, by the lords north of the Trent, headed by the Duke of Newcastle. The Scots were not to be outdone, and so, in Edinburgh, feastings and displays of like splendour awaited the satiated King. Only when he had departed again was there time to meditate that instead of impoverishing his subjects, a wise King would " have entered that country like a river that overflows a hungry ground."

There were other things besides extravagance that merited disfavour, when the Scots reflected. Some of the more thoughtful Presbyterians, to whom " divine right " was of evil omen, may have looked askance at the occasion when Charles went to his chapel royal in state and made a solemn offertory " and thereafter touched about one hundred persons that were troubled with the King's evil, putting about every one of their necks a piece of gold (coined for the purpose) hung at a white silk riband." But this parade of the attributes of divine royalty was at least hallowed by custom. So much could not be said for certain innovations in the coronation ceremony, which many a dour Scot watched with uneasy foreboding.

Yet to Charles himself the coronation was a great and sacred occasion. He escaped as early as he could from the feast at Edinburgh Castle, on the evening previous to the ceremony, and spent much of the night in quiet meditation. He rose betimes next morning and bore himself with tranquil dignity through the tiring ceremonial of the day. At eight o'clock he received the Scottish nobility and the officers of state in the great hall of the castle and replied to their offer of service, in words made tragic by the sad irony of the years to come.

"He did esteem their affections more than the crown of many kingdoms, and would by God's assistance bestow his life in their defence, wishing to live no longer than he might see this kingdom flourish in all happiness."

Then, in great procession, "in crimson velvet robes, riding on a rich foot cloth, all embroidered with silver and pearl," Charles rode down the long mile from the Castle to Holyrood. At the entrance to the Abbey Church he was met by the Archbishop of St. Andrews. Then followed a lengthy service beginning with a sermon, adorned by many psalms and anthems, interspersed with brief intervals of "repose" for Charles, and marked not only by the people's acceptance of the King, and by the taking of the coronation oaths, but finally after many prayers, by the ceremony of anointing.

And here it was that many who had looked askance at the kneeling and the bowing, and the bishop's lawn sleeves, could no longer stifle disapproval. Standing by the communion table, Charles was disrobed of his upper garment, and "the loops of his coat hanging open at the several places," he was anointed after a prayer, first upon his breast, then betwixt his shoulders, thirdly, on "both the points of his shoulders, and lastly, the boughs of his armes." He was next invested with the royal robes of James IV, and girt with the king's sword. Spurs were put on his heels by the Earl Marshal and then, at last, the Archbishop placed the crown upon his head. To Charles, it was a great experience, a sacramental act. To the most of the onlookers it was an innovation that smacked of prelacy and popery, the joint-villains of Scottish religious thought.

The King's appointment of certain bishops to offices of state, and his efforts to reform the tithe system and recover certain lands for the Church roused opposition as surely as his ritualist leanings in religion. He himself, conscious only of good intentions, was depressed. An accident cast a gloom over the close of the visit, that

seemed to the King symbolic. When crossing the Forth, at the end of a progress through Scotland, a boat capsized, and certain of the royal servants were drowned.

"That night the King was sad and melancholious; and returning homeward out of Edinburgh he made mention that at his entry he had met with fire; for some houses in Dalkeith were burnt, and now about the time of his removal the water in his own sight had drowned some of his servants. He went to England out of Seatoun, and when he was past Berwick he rode post, that he might be the first reporter of these things to his Queen himself."

Henrietta was pregnant and he hated to be away from her. She was at Greenwich, and he cut across the Thames at Blackwall that he might avoid London and reach her more quickly, and pour out to her, when he knew she was well, a story of mingled triumph and foreboding, of the glory of anointed kingship, and the doubts of a very ordinary man.

Four years passed. In Scotland, at the King's command the bishops drew up a Book of Canons, redolent of the theories of divine kingship, and a liturgy for use in the Church of Scotland, which the King and Laud approved. In 1637 the liturgy was returned to Edinburgh with an order that it should be read in all the churches on a fixed Sunday in July. By his four years delay, and by allowing the liturgy to be framed by the Scots bishops and not imposed from Whitehall, Charles considered that he had shown moderation and good-feeling; it never entered his head that he should leave the northern Church without a liturgy; he took it for granted that all men of decent feeling must agree with the advantages of a lovely form of service, in which beauty of phrase and nobility of thought were combined. He had no sense of acting tyrannically. But to the Presbyterian Scot, Charles' liturgy was anathema, "a Popish-Scottish-English Mass service book." What more could one say?

On July 23rd, 1637, the new liturgy was read in St. Giles' Cathedral. Jenny Geddes, a serving wench, flung her stool at Dean Hannay's head as he began to read from the hated book. Nor were mistresses more seemly than their maids; one gentlewoman, hearing her neighbour say "Amen," struck him with her Bible, crying: "Traitor, dost thou say Mass at my ear?" As the Dean proceeded, an uproar arose, cudgels were brandished and missiles hurled across the church. The Bishop went into the pulpit to remonstrate but spiritual admonition failed to still the disturbance. It was necessary to summon the lay authorities, and the Provost, Baillies and Magistrates of Edinburgh were called down from the gallery, where they attended service in state, to oust the unruly and restore quiet in the sacred place. Only to the accompaniment of threats and shouts from the rabble without could the service be concluded.

Word of the riot came post haste to Charles at Whitehall. There followed some anxious weeks without news—for a reason above politics; "during harvest, men were at work and quiet." But as soon as the grain for the winter was gathered in, folk of every rank and nature resorted to Edinburgh to petition against the service-book. Charles had to decide whether to give way entirely or to persist in face of an opposition that might go to any lengths. Now was the moment for careful consideration and a consistent policy. The King was incapable either of a gracious withdrawal or of efficient coercion. He inclined to leniency at first, but when Laud urged him to stand firm for the good of the Church, his real devotion to the ideals of episcopacy was stronger than his desire to please. The liturgy was not withdrawn, and some unpalatable edicts were published at Edinburgh ordering the petitioners to leave the town, and postponing an answer till they were in more peaceable mood. But at the reading of the

edicts, a hapless Scottish bishop was chased by some three hundred women, who suspected him of concealing a crucifix under his vestments. He was dragged by friends into the safety of the Council House; but the Treasurer, Traquair, who went to his assistance had his white staff broken, and only achieved safety "without hat or cloak like a notorious malefactor." It said little for the hopes of peace. Traquair obtained leave to come up to Whitehall where he told Charles plainly that if he would not withdraw the liturgy he must be ready to support it with forty thousand men. Charles was dismayed but only half-convinced. He sent the disgusted Treasurer home with another proclamation, which tried in vain to explain that the service-book had nothing to do with popery, and ordered the petitioners to disperse, with a pardon for their "preposterous zeal." Such a policy of persuasion and explanation had nothing to recommend it. The royal words were received with jeers and laughter!

In February 1638, the malcontents united themselves by the most famous of the many bonds or covenants that are the milestones of Scottish religious history. Couched in moderate terms, that all might subscribe, the National Covenant bound together people of every kind and class, who demanded not merely the recall of the liturgy but also a drastic restriction of the bishops' powers. In Edinburgh, on the allotted day, from the early hours of morning till long after nightfall, thousands came and went in the yard of Greyfriars Church and there amongst the tombstones, without the city walls, they inscribed their names to the bond. Some came in carriages and were men of high estate, some rode on horseback in soldiers' uniform, or the gay attire of cavalier and squire, some wore the tall hats of the preacher, some had still the workman's apron at their waists, and some were dressed in the homespun of the lowland farmers. Merchants of Edinburgh signed their names,



CHARLES I
with Henrietta Maria and two children
(After Van Dyck)

and chieftains from distant glens added theirs ; among the crowd, ladies walked and talked, and market-women listened to the exhortations of Henderson, the preacher. Next day, wherever men rode upon their several affairs, they bore with them a copy of the Covenant, and from every corner of Scotland, men signed in eagerness—and occasionally in fear. Some there were who, pricking their arms with their daggers, wrote their names in blood, as witness of their faith and resolution.

When Whitehall heard the news, Charles called it damnable, losing his temper for once. Henrietta, shaken for the first time in her life of careless pleasure, was afraid. She was shrewder than her husband in spite of her frivolities. She urged the King to give way, fully and freely. But Charles was still angry. "When he wished," he declared, "he could reduce those subjects to obedience." Laud seized his opportunity and urged *Thorough* ; but Charles immediately switched to the other point of view, for the officious Archbishop was getting on his nerves during this anxious spring. He would not be ruled by him, or any other Englishman ; he would deal with Scotland himself through a Scottish intermediary. In May 1638, Hamilton was sent north. For six months he cajoled and threatened in turn, twice returning to the King for fresh instructions, and bearing fresh concessions back to Scotland. The liturgy was given up and in November a General Assembly met at Glasgow. One thing was lacking, mutual trust. Charles' concessions, which might have accomplished something in 1637, meant nothing in 1638, and Hamilton never succeeded in winning the respect of enemies, nor the confidence of friends. He was a moderate, and as such might have been expected to reconcile the disputants, but in urging concessions he seemed to be moved by fear as much as desire, and, moreover, his moderation seemed to the Covenanters as to Laud, to proceed from the lack of

any deep and honest principle, rather than from balanced thinking. Co-operation was impossible; Hamilton refused to recognize the legality of the Assembly owing to a dispute over the methods of election, and the Assembly, remaining in session after his withdrawal, replied by the abolition of bishops and the denial of Charles' authority.

To the King, who felt he had offered friendship and found disloyalty, only one course now seemed possible. His northern subjects had defied him; they must be reduced to obedience, and that in no half-hearted way. Nor was it merely with the righteous wrath of a King whose authority had been flouted that Charles issued his commissions of array and called on his subjects for gifts of money, and offers of service. Something of his youthful enthusiasm for martial exercises stirred in his blood again. He determined to ride out himself at the head of his army!

In March 1639, while Hamilton sailed into the Forth only to find himself impotent and Edinburgh in the hands of the Covenanters, Charles rode north to York and thence to Berwick. And with him, in a gay cavalcade, went a grand array of noblemen and their armed bands, trumpets and pennons and prancing steeds—and underneath discontent, apathy and wretchedness. For the forces that had been gathered together were uncertain as to the justice of their quarrel, and very uncertain as to the prospects of food and pay. The Londoners, asked for a loan, had made but a niggardly response and Wentworth when he heard of "their bare offer of £5,000" wrote to Laud "I am most monstrously scandalized at it, for the common soldier, pay him, he will be sure to follow his leader but beware . . . of an ill-paid army." Volunteers came in slowly, and the army, which eventually reached 15,000 in numbers, was unruly, inexperienced in warfare, and ill-commanded. Arundel, the Earl-Marshal, was seconded by Lord

Holland, General of the Horse, who "neither loved Hamilton nor Wentworth nor Laud nor almost anything that was then done in Church and state." In the only skirmish of the war he retreated precipitately before Leslie at Kelso. Essex, the next in command, was a soldier to the core, and he behaved with military precision, obeying orders and avoiding all communication with the Scottish rebels who endeavoured to get into touch with him. But underneath his silent and correct exterior was a bitter heart, for the promotion of Holland to be his superior officer was only the culmination of years of neglect at court. While his conscience could not approve the King's measures, his instinctive loyalty was bruised by Charles' continued neglect.

It was little wonder that, as he dallied in the north, the King's first enthusiasm dwindled into melancholy. From Whitehall, Henrietta urged him to action; but Charles was soldier enough to realize that to fight now was to court disaster. Wentworth himself writing from Ireland urged delay. He declared it would be a work of two or three summers to quiet Scotland. But the delay he envisaged was that of a well-disciplined army held in leash. He was dismayed when he heard of the true state of affairs. "Our army is but weak," wrote Sir Edmund Verney, "our purse is weaker; and if we fight with these forces and early in the year we shall have our throats cut, and to delay fighting long we cannot for want of money to keep our army together." The cold of the northern spring was so keen that the men suffered agonies at night, sleeping uncovered on the bare ground. Charles was genuinely grieved at their plight. Only one alternative was left him, that of making peace. It was useless to turn to his councillors for advice. His old secretary, Coke, still faithful and still bewildered "understood nothing that had been done in Scotland and thought that nothing that was

done there worth such a journey as the King had put himself to." The Treasurer of the Household, Sir Henry Vane, was a friend of Hamilton's and advocated delay. "He was a busy and a bustling man who cared for no man otherwise than as he found it very convenient to himself." His counsels of compromise suited the King's inclination for now it had come to the point, he disliked the idea of fighting his own countrymen intensely.

The Scottish forces consisted, not of raw recruits like their English opponents, but of well-trained troops, experienced in the foreign wars, under the skilled leadership of "that old little crooked soldier," Alexander Leslie. At Dunselaw, six miles from Berwick, they faced their king, with Scotland at their back.

Thence commissioners were sent into the English camp, and Charles, hearing of their arrival, rode out from Berwick to speak with them. The interviews were mutually agreeable. "The King was very sober, meek and patient to hear all," Commissioner Baillie reported, "our spokesmen were very earnest to speak much. That day there was a sweet and loving conclusion. . . . His Majesty was ever the better loved of all that heard him as one of the most reasonable sweet persons they had ever seen." Charles rejoiced in the clear atmosphere of intelligent conversation, and in mid-June the Pacification of Berwick was concluded, leaving the points at issue to the decision of a Scottish Parliament and Assembly.

The armies were disbanded. Essex was dismissed without a word and went away embittered by the slight. Charles was thinking of other things, distracted by a petty quarrel between Newcastle and Holland in which he had to intervene to prevent a duel. He returned in no good mood to London, to find the poets of Whitehall ready to hymn the occasion as one of triumph.

"Welcome, great sir, with all the joy that's due
To the return of peace and you . . .
The armour now may be hung up to sight
And only in their halls the children fright."

The poet was a poor prophet. By the summer of 1640, the two armies were again opposing each other on the border. The truce had been disliked both in Edinburgh and at Whitehall; recriminations and mutual distrust had fanned the flames; the Assembly had abolished episcopacy, and when the Scottish Parliament attempted to confirm this, Charles refused to give his assent to its acts. A second resort to arms was inevitable.

But before it came about much had happened in England. The whole temper of the court had been changed and the Short Parliament had come and gone. Above all, Wentworth had come home. Ireland had aged him; his hair was grey, and his body crippled with gout and dysentery. A certain cantankerousness had embittered him. But he was "thorough," honest, vigorous still. In January 1640, he became the Earl of Strafford and the King's chief adviser.

He did not find his task an easy one. Charles' very virtues, his conscientiousness, his mild temper, his lack of all tyrannous instincts, made him an invidious figure-head for the system of "thorough." His faults of indecision and crooked dealing became more apparent as difficulties increased. Only a consistent policy whether of force or conciliation could save him now, for he was dealing not only with open revolt in Scotland but with potential rebels in England. But he was incapable of consistency, because of that shiftiness in his mental and moral calibre which nullified his good intentions, and the efforts of his wiser councillors. It was pathological: one should pity rather than condemn. But it was fatal.

Strafford's chief opponent was Vane, whom he had needlessly insulted, for knowing that Vane coveted the

barony of Raby, Strafford had adopted the style himself on his creation as a peer. Thus, unworthily, he had shown his scorn of one who brooded on vengeance and obtained it. Vane had been thrust to the fore by Hamilton's patronage and the Queen's favour, and had replaced Coke early in the year. After fifteen years faithful service the old man was turned out of office with little more than bare thanks. The new secretary was not without ability, in a quiet, sleek way, but he had no conceptions of state-craft, and his political morality was doubtful. His chief anxiety was that the world should recognize his own importance; his chief aim to make a patrimony and gain a title.

This was the man who was always at the King's side during the critical months of 1640. Into Charles' ears he poured counsels, moulded by his own passions and prejudices and infused always by a hatred of Strafford, the only man who had a definite policy which might have saved the King.

Charles wavered between the advice of his two counsellors, and he had now to reckon also with a new Henrietta. The alliance of the Queen with Hamilton and Vane, was based on no personal attraction like the the dwindling affection for Lord Holland, whose good looks could no longer excuse his politics. Henrietta always knew what she wanted, but she was too practical, too French, to cry for the moon. Her care-free life had gone for ever; it was no good regretting past joys. Until the Scottish revolt was crushed Charles was in danger! In the autumn of 1639 she bore her youngest son, Henry of Oatlands. Her last two babies had died, the one in infancy, the other at birth. Now in her joy that things were well again, she felt better in health than ever before after the birth of a child, and in her renewed vigour determined to think and act for two. She loved her husband's gentle nature, but she estimated his political grasp and insight at their true worth. So, Henrietta

threw herself into politics with as much zest as heretofore she had revelled in acting, or in the joy of her babies. Hamilton was her sponsor and Vane her creature; but she was too shrewd to trust them entirely and, as the months passed, she recognized in Strafford's energy a spirit akin to her own. She admitted him to be the King's most capable and trustworthy minister, and so, like a true woman, she tried to like him personally, to ignore his ugliness and discover his charm, and to note that he had "the finest hands in the world."

Strafford's policy could, as usual, be summed up in one word: efficiency. The revolt in Scotland must be crushed; an army must therefore be raised and there must be no repetition of the catastrophe of the previous year. The first essential was money. The only way in which a large sum of money could be obtained was by parliamentary grant. Strafford advocated summoning a Parliament. It was a staggering idea, and as the rumour spread through England men were amazed and refused to believe it. Charles' other councillors were afraid, but Strafford's forceful personality dominated the council and the King's mind. It was agreed that a Parliament should meet in April. The very boldness of the step attracted Strafford, who moreover was always inclined to underestimate his opponents, and considered that no harm could come of the experiment even if it failed, discussing with his fellow councillors the means whereby a voluntary loan could be raised in that eventuality. Had he been present in England during the previous eleven years and realized the bitter resentment which ship money and Laud's religious policy had incurred, he might have advised differently, but on the other hand his experience with Parliaments in Ireland had been satisfactory, and orderly by nature, he preferred constitutional means if possible. So he pressed Charles to take the dangerous step, and the King,

indulging in optimistic hopes of agreement, readily assented. Meanwhile Strafford crossed to Ireland and summoned the Irish Parliament. He obtained supplies, and raised an efficient force which was held in readiness for further orders. He returned at the end of March, and at Chester was struck down by dysentery, after a stormy passage of which he writes, "I forced the Captain to sea against his will, I have since received my correction for it, a marvellous foul and dangerous night indeed we have had of it. . . . The churlish sea hath shaken this distempered body of mine most extremely. . . ." In spite of his sickness, he pressed on in a litter and reached London on April 27th, when the Short Parliament, which had met on the thirteenth, was half-way through its brief three weeks of existence.

Charles had met his subjects without any fear of failure. He considered that he held a trump card in his hand, for he had intercepted a letter from certain Scottish lords to the French King which, by its superscription "au Roi," seemed to acknowledge Louis' sovereignty. It is typical of Charles that, overwhelmed by his own horror at this apparent treason, this slight upon his authority and the divine right of hereditary kingship, he could not imagine that it might fail to be of the same paramount importance to others. In his opening speech to Parliament he laid the letter before it, never doubting that all loyal subjects would eagerly help him against such traitors, and put aside for a while any small grievance with which the previous eleven years' administration might have supplied them. He was genuinely hurt when Parliament remained unmoved, and the Commons returning to their own House proceeded to debate their own affairs, with no immediate reference to the Scots. Charles realized with dismay that the old weary round of "redress of grievances before supply," royal messages and counter-remonstrances, was to begin again, and rued the day when he had

subjected himself once more to the indignities and bickerings of parliamentary rule.

The Commons who assembled in St. Stephen's Chapel after the King had opened Parliament, were for the most part young men who had not sat in the House before. The thoughts of many were of 1628, but of the erstwhile leaders of that day Eliot was dead, and Wentworth was Black Tom, the Tyrant. Ned Hyde, the brilliant young lawyer, sat next to his friend Falkland, the gentle philosopher who had abandoned the peace of Berkshire at the call of the State, and thus described the scene: "While men gazed upon each other looking who should begin . . . Mr. Pym, a man of good reputation . . . who had been as long in these assemblies as any man living, broke the ice." Having taken the initiative John Pym did the job thoroughly (as he did everything to which he turned his hand) and spoke for two hours, laying down the principles of his political belief and urging a full inquiry into the specific grievances under which England was suffering. In a telling phrase he summed up the belief which was to be the constructive watchword of the revolution to come. "The powers of Parliament are to the body politic as the rational faculty of the soul to man." Here was a worthy challenge to the divine right of kings!

The listening Commons heard Pym's speech with unflagging interest. He had none of Eliot's flamboyant oratory, and few of the usual characteristics of a leader of men. But when he sat down, the cry arose "a good oration." Pym had triumphed and henceforward he dominated this Parliament and its successor. He was a man over middle age, of "pleasant countenance and sweet behaviour." His wife had died after a few years of married life in 1620 and, unlike most of his contemporaries, he did not marry again. He lived quietly during the eleven years autocracy, for he was not the type of man to court publicity. Reserved and simple

in tastes and character, he now devoted his whole energy, and the rest of his life, to the work of establishing the sovereignty of Parliament. He combined determination with moderation, practical ability with political insight, moral fervour with unflinching opportunism.

During the brief life of the Short Parliament he "kept a table" at a house nearby Westminster and "transacted much business and invited thither those of whose conversation he had any hope." Throughout 1640, he and certain others including Hampden and Lord Saye and Sele met regularly to discuss matters of policy, and when the elections for the Long Parliament were pending, he and his companions rode through the shires, urging the freeholders to choose worthy representatives. It needed real imaginative power to envisage the possibilities inherent in some such organization of public opinion, within the House and without, for the idea was an entirely new one, and it is as a great parliamentarian rather than as a constructive statesman that Pym won his reputation. In his intolerance to any opinions but his own, and his readiness to adopt doubtful means to gain his end, he showed himself no better than his contemporaries, but his hatred of the court was free from vindictiveness, his personal probity was unassailable, and his devotion to his cause heroic. The very moderation of his method of attack, keeping in check any licentiousness in the speech or spirit of his supporters, made him the more dangerous an adversary. Vane's bureaucratic mind, or Strafford's fierce idealism had little chance against his quiet determination, and his implacable though courteous bearing.

In his great speech Pym had not mentioned any "evil counsellor" by name, but suggested a request to the Lords to petition the King for redress. Strafford when he reached London found Charles irritated and alarmed at the refusal of supplies and urged him to go

down to the House of Lords in person and appeal to their loyalty. Charles willingly agreed, and the peers touched by his earnestness, voted that supplies should precede the consideration of grievances. To the Commons this was tantamount to a breach of privilege, and feelings were embittered. There were threats of a dissolution if a grant were not forthcoming, for the King's temper was frayed. He had spent a wretched fortnight holding meetings of Council, where the multitude of counsellors only confused the issue, rising in anger from his half-finished supper upon the news of an unwelcome resolution in the Commons, hoping against hope for some miraculous agreement, and quite unable to realize that honest men might hear his case and still oppose him. At a Council-meeting on Sunday, May 3rd, he determined upon Strafford's suggestion to renounce completely his right to ship money. In return he would ask the House for twelve subsidies. Strafford, knowing well how the Commons resented the least hint of dictation in money matters, wished him not to mention any amount, trusting to his subjects' generosity. Eventually Charles agreed to accept eight subsidies, but after the Council had dispersed it is probable that in private conversation, Vane urged the King to allow him to name the original number. Next morning, the fourth, Vane took the royal message regarding ship money to the House and asked for twelve subsidies in return. The Commons, delighted at the concession, considered making a grant but they thought twelve subsidies excessive; generosity was never their strong point! They had their reasons, however; with such supplies, Charles would be independent and their power would have vanished. But some, young Hyde and his friends prominent among them, would have liked to have crystallized the feeling of conciliation in the atmosphere by a motion on the desirability of a grant leaving out all question of the

amount. Vane, however, reiterated that the King could accept no less than twelve subsidies, and thus closed all avenues of compromise. A golden opportunity had been lost. He reported to the King, with entire disregard to the tone of the debate, that the Commons would not give a penny. Charles' temper, so seldom aroused, flared up at this apparent instance of ingratitude.

Further news enraged him yet more. The Commons' leaders, whom he already suspected of intriguing with the Scots, had agreed to put forward a motion next day, asking for a treaty with the rebels. This was all he got, in return for surrendering his prerogative. This was all the loyalty of his subjects could achieve. He called a council for six o'clock next morning, the fifth, and in spite of Strafford's desire for delay announced his intention of dissolving Parliament. This was done the same day. Vane had ruined a real chance of agreement. Some said he had done it willingly in his malice against Strafford whose policy he was glad to ruin. Petty spite may have influenced him, but he was no large-scale villain; it is more likely that his narrow mind never grasped the issue nor the possibilities of tragedy that lay in the darkening future. As for Charles, when he realized the full significance of his own precipitancy, he was dismayed and even wondered if he could recall his writ. But Strafford, who had before urged constitutional courses, now begged him not to hesitate. The bishops in convocation had shown their affection by a liberal grant. The Privy Councillors were ready to follow suit. An appeal must again be made to London. Men must be pressed into service. Somehow or other the Scottish war must be carried to a successful conclusion. The matter was thoroughly thrashed out in committee on May 5th, and though Northumberland, the commander-in-chief, and others who had no fondness for the quarrel doubted and advised delay, Strafford refused to let difficulties damp

his zeal, and reminded Charles that there was the Irish army which could be used if necessary to subdue this kingdom. They were all talking of Scotland and his meaning was clear; it was not so clear a year later when the secretary's notes of this Council meeting provided Pym with his main charge against the King's only strong counsellor. It was said then that Strafford would have used the Irish army to subdue England itself if necessary—and indeed he was roused to the pitch when he would stay at nothing to achieve efficiency and peace. For, in London itself, there were signs of disorder. "The great damp" which "seized upon the spirits of the whole nation" when the Short Parliament ended, gave place in the city to the flames of mob-violence.

May was a month of horrors. For the first time in his reign, Charles heard the shouts of rioters; and felt tragedy by his side as he saw Laud's tired face, when the Archbishop came to Whitehall for refuge. For an unruly mob gathering in Southwark after dusk had borne down on Lambeth to hunt "William the Fox," whom they accused unfairly of breaking the Parliament. Some of the leaders were arrested, but three days later the mob attacked the prisons and released their comrades. Charles was thoroughly miserable. Strafford collapsed with an attack of dysentery, and with the lack of his steady counsel, the King fumbled like a man in the dark. But then Strafford took a turn for the better, and Charles, as if the mere thought of his support reinvigorated him, laid aside hesitation and decided in council to deal sternly with the rioters, and abandon any idea of peace with Scotland. Two wretches were executed, and the disturbances ceased, though, in Whitehall itself, the spirit of sedition had spread and the King found scratched upon his window "God save the King, confound the Queen and her children, and give us the Palsgrave to reign in this kingdom." Charles acted with an impetuosity worthy of his wife and

dashed the glass into fragments with his fist. Meanwhile, a mutinous army was being hounded northwards to meet the Scots. London refused to pay the loan demanded of it, and four aldermen were imprisoned. Charles found his first and only attempt at open tyranny, a sorry affair. Even Strafford was disillusioned; that will-o'-the-wisp efficiency was not to be found in a land where half the population were potential rebels.

In August, the Scottish army took the initiative and crossed the Border. They routed an English troop at Newburn and settled down to wait developments. The news came to Whitehall one Sunday. The King was "extraordinarily perturbed." The Council met, and after a long sitting it was decided that without loss of time Charles should proceed to York. But when he reached the north, he found such troops as had been mustered were "scanty and in no sort of order." Many of the better sort sympathized with the rebels; many were vagabonds, and all were ill-supplied. One captain kept discipline by singing psalms all day as he marched; other companies, less well-controlled, burst into churches and broke down the altar-rails. Some regiments, mustered in London to go north by sea, riotously refused to embark, and nothing could be done but dismiss them. Northumberland, the commander-in-chief, hated the whole business, and torn between loyalty and sympathy with the Scots his nerve gave way, and a welcome illness freed him from decision. But illness in no way welcome had also overwhelmed Strafford, striking him down as he pressed north to join the King and forcing him "to stop full of the most painful thoughts."

Again it was stalemate. And in two respects it was a far worse situation than in the previous year. Then the rebels had been on the defensive in their own land; now they were on English soil, triumphant. Then the temper of England was unknown or at least unexpressed.

Now the force of public opinion at home was too great for any mere dissolution of Parliament to prevent its expression. At the end of August a group of Puritan lords in London presented to the council for transmission to the King, a petition obviously inspired by Pym. It asked specifically not merely for another Parliament but for the punishment of "evil counsellors" and peace without bloodshed with the Scots. Charles thought miserably of Buckingham and his own first uneasy years as King. Was it all to happen again? Were there no loyal friends to help him. Partly to gain time, but largely as a genuine attempt to have honest advice, he summoned his peers to attend him in council at York.

On September 24th he met them, and spoke to them from his heart. "I have not known his Majesty express himself better since I have had the honour to serve him," Vane commented, and added that "it was to the great satisfaction of all that heard him." It might well be, for Charles agreed without demur to the inevitable advice that was given him, a new Parliament and a treaty with the Scots, whose commissioners awaited the King's at Ripon. What else Charles had hoped from his peers it is difficult to say. It was perhaps a last despairing attempt to feel himself in touch with friends, to put his point of view before gentlemen, as nearly equal as any could be to himself, lonely on the pinnacle of sovereignty. On the copies of the speech he made at York, there was printed the motto of the Scottish Standard "The Lord be with you while ye be with Him." Charles could never doubt the righteousness of his cause.

Peace was made at Ripon, and the Scottish commissioners came up to London to submit their cause to the adjudication of an English Parliament.

Meanwhile the Scottish army squatted in Northumberland. It was the sinister background to the drama about to be enacted at Westminster. On November 3rd, 1640,

the Long Parliament met. Should it prove unruly Charles did not doubt it would go the way of its predecessors. But he was sick of revolt, and full of good resolutions: he must, of course, be faithful to his servants, and defend his Church; for the rest, Parliament would find him accommodating. Alas! the Commons hated many things—but most of all his servants and his Church!

CHAPTER VIII

STRAFFORD

"I see it a bad exchange to wound a man's owne conscience, thereby to salve State sores."—*Eikon Basilike.*

GREY November dawned upon a strained and anxious England. In the north, two armies faced each other. The Scots were well-disciplined and content to await quietly the issue of events. The English troops, uncertain of their purpose or their loyalty, provided some protection none the less for their commander, Strafford, who stayed at York in his own home county, safe for the moment from the torrent of hatred which would surely engulf him if he went south. Yet, ill though he was, his spirit was not broken, and he had sent word to the King that if his counsel were needed, no fear of the Commons' wrath should keep him from Whitehall.

Charles had returned from the north, and, as he had promised, had summoned Parliament. The House of Lords was torn by divided loyalties and suspicious of the Commons' encroachments, but the peers of the realm never forgot that they were trustees for the liberties of England. It was Charles' most tragic mistake that he had failed to bind to him by personal ties the nobler element in the peerage, so that men like Essex, Bedford, Warwick, worked in close accord with the Commons' leaders, instead of being impartial arbiters between the King and his opponents. The Lower House met with a fixed determination that the fiasco of the spring should not be repeated. Charles should not get rid of them so easily again. They were anxious for the future, and widely diverse in their political philosophies and religious ideals, but all potential differences were for the time being

hidden under the universal resolve, to purge the court of evil counsellors, and to put an end to the obnoxious practices of arbitrary rule.

At Whitehall, a hesitant King and an impetuous Queen jarred upon each other, newly-converted Catholics vacillated between the confessional and flight, self-seeking courtiers hid their jewels or bragged of foolhardy plots, and a few honest men, Juxon, the quiet-souled treasurer, and Nicholas, the honest clerk, steadily pursued their life of service though the framework of existence was tottering about them. For Charles there could be neither the serenity of Juxon nor the whole-hearted zeal of Henrietta. For her, Parliament was an enemy to be tricked or beaten, and to ruin it she turned in quick succession to the Pope, to France, to the army, planning to use force or endeavouring by intrigue to win over hesitant peers or brilliant commoners. But she had no conception of the force of the national feeling that was behind the Parliament-men, and she compassed little except the creation of an atmosphere of suspicious mystery which did the royal cause more harm than any overt acts. Charles, too, failed to realize the true situation; he thought he was dealing with a stream which he might dam by occasional concessions when he was, in truth, helpless before an avalanche. Only, as it bore him from his feet, tearing away from him not only kingly authority but peace of mind, did he snatch impotently at those wild possibilities with which his wife dallied, achieving nothing beyond the destruction of that chance of compromise which might have emerged after the first torrent of feeling had spent itself.

Charles, who loved to live by maxim, had none to guide him in his extremity. He was like a blind man at the cross-roads and he had neither imagination to realize the pass in which he stood, nor power of decision to nerve him to walk with constancy down any path. He stood by helpless while the Star Chamber sentences of

previous years were revoked, and the victims, Leighton, blind, deaf and crippled, young Lilburne, and sour-faced Prynne, returned to London amid a riotous welcome such as the King had never known. When he reprieved Goodman, a priest who had been condemned to death for no other reason than his religion, he had to submit to angry demands from both Houses that "justice" should take its course, and though in the end Goodman was left in prison, it was only because the Commons lost interest when they had wrung a promise from Charles to banish the priests. The King assented without complaint but without conviction to the humiliating measures laid before him. Ship money judgments were reversed; monopolies declared illegal; religious innovations condemned. He made concessions, largely because he had no choice, but partly because he genuinely hoped for eventual agreement, and failed to realize that divine hereditary right was doomed, once the sovereignty of Parliament and the sanctity of law had become the watchwords of the nation. Unfortunately, he never succeeded in making his concessions graciously. He gave way too late with a note of petulance in his voice so that he gained no credit from his piecemeal surrender of his prerogative. "It proceeds from policy, not love." Only when measures were introduced to ensure regular Parliaments did he attempt resistance. On January 23rd he called both Houses to meet him at Whitehall and declared that some men "put no difference betwixt reformation and alteration of government." He referred to the miscellaneous petitions he was receiving, directed against episcopacy, and pleaded for quick supplies that the armies in the north might be paid off. He then offered to reform "all innovations in the Church and commonwealth," to regulate the Courts of Justice "according to law," to abandon illegal or oppressive sources of revenue, to return, in fact, to "the purest times of Queen Elizabeth's days." But he declared that

he could not surrender his right to summon Parliament when he wished, nor deprive the bishops of their seats in the House of Lords. As a result, the speech, friendly in intention and sincere in spirit though it was, filled most of the Parliament-men "with sad apprehensions of future evils in case his Majesty should be irremovably fixed to uphold the bishops in their wealth, power and tyranny." His opponents, clear-sighted men, fastened on this one point, in itself enough to wreck a nation, while Charles hoped to accomplish he knew not what by vague generalizations of goodwill, without possessing either the tact or the gift of happy expression or the vigorous common sense, which enabled the Tudors to work marvels with words without compromising their power or dignity. Had Charles been the tyrant the followers of Pym imagined, and had the system of arbitrary rule which he erected before 1640 been the result not of haphazard circumstance but of *Thorough*, he might now have taken up a very different attitude. He might have seized the Commons' leaders, he might have issued an ultimatum and been prepared to back it by force secured in Ireland or on the continent. He might have blustered, or intrigued, or—if he decided the risks were too great for resistance—have given way fully and freely on every point, and begun again. But he would not have been Charles. His kingship meant something definite to him; principle not expediency inspired his political and religious point of view. But his temper was too mild, his mentality too pliable for him to have woven those principles into a consistent policy which might now be defended to the last ditch. He was neither tyrant nor scoundrel; he was incapable either of taking the initiative in crushing his opponents or of abandoning by a willing agreement his whole philosophy of life. He could neither resist nor co-operate. He had to give way grudgingly on every point.

A fortnight after the Whitehall speech he assented

miserably to the Triennial Bill which forced him to call a Parliament every three years. Bonfires of joy were lit in the streets of London, but those who watched the King saw that he found it hard to control "the passions which tortured him." It was vain to hope that he might rid himself of these subjects who tyrannized over their King. For behind Parliament was the Scottish Army. Every day it must be paid its maintenance money, while the Scottish Commissioners and representatives of the Parliament discussed with no undue haste the details of a permanent settlement and made it clear that they did not desire the King's presence at the discussions. If the maintenance money was not produced, the Scots might sweep south and no forces in being in England could withstand them. Hence it was impossible to flout and destroy this Parliament as Charles had destroyed its predecessors. He must have money from the Commons to pay the Scots; if not, he might find himself a prisoner in his own capital city, among citizens who loved the besiegers better than their King. It was the presence of the Scottish Army in England which was the hard fact that rendered barren all Henrietta's wild schemes, and Charles' half-hearted bursts of resistance. His compliance was equally ineffective because it never proceeded from conviction and no superficial compromise could hide the fundamental differences between the men who hated bishops, and based kingship on consent, and the King who had been bred upon theories of divine right, and who loved the bishops as the intermediaries of Christ.

By the time when a chance of safety came through his opponents' disagreements over matters of religion, Charles was a broken man. His subjects were depriving him of all but his "title and the naked shows of King," but he had suffered a deeper disgrace than this. He had betrayed his friend. Strafford was dead. No wiles, no pleadings, no plots, no concessions had sufficed to save

him. The tragic story of his downfall runs like a thread of tarnished gold through the dusky web and woof of parliamentary proceedings.

Strafford, at York, had been safe. The way to Ireland lay open to him, and there a well-disciplined army was gathered in readiness. No man dare urge openly its use in England; any such act would have alienated the last shred of sympathy from the King. But at the head of such a force, Strafford could have defied his enemies and waited upon the event. But "Black" Tom was not in reality the villain men thought him; he was hot-headed, but he was loyal through and through. Charles needed him, bewildered by conflicting counsels. He summoned him to London, vowing that he should not suffer in his person, honour or fortune. Henrietta added her entreaties. Strafford was the only man she knew, who might *do* something and thus save her husband. Strafford deliberately put safety behind him and came. Conscious though he was of the dangers that beset him, he declared "yet my heart is good; and I find nothing cold in me." He arrived in London late on Monday, November 9th. And, as Henrietta had expected, he at once prepared to act. The war should be carried into the enemy's camp and the opposition crippled by the arrest of their leaders on the well-founded charge of "treasonable correspondence with the Scotch." Strafford having acquainted Charles with his scheme on the Tuesday, proposed to bring the charge on Wednesday morning in the House of Lords.

But Wednesday came, and Strafford sat silent. At the last moment, Charles had drawn back. The course suggested would, he knew, end all hope of compromise; there could be no withdrawing from "Thorough" afterwards. He was not sure his conscience justified such drastic action. He hesitated. But Pym did not hesitate. As usual, he had wind of what was happening. Not a moment was to be lost. By nightfall, Strafford was caged.

Locking their doors against interruption, the Commons had framed their charges against him on that same Wednesday morning. Then Mr. Pym went up with a number at his back to the Upper House and formally accused Strafford of treason, demanding his immediate arrest. "The word goes in haste to the Lord Lieutenant where he was with the King." Now was his last chance of safety, but he scorned to flee. "I will go and look my accusers in the face," he cried. A contemporary described the scene: "With speed, he comes to the House—he calls rudely at the door. James Maxwell, Keeper of the Black Rod, opens; his lordship, with a proud glooming countenance, makes towards his place at the board head but at once many bid him void the house, so he is forced, in confusion, to go to the door till he is called. After consultation, being called in, he stands, but is commanded to kneel; and on his knees to hear the sentence. Being on his knees, he is delivered to the Keeper of the Black Rod, to be prisoner till he was cleared of these crimes the House of Commons had charged him with. He offered to speak, but was commanded to be gone, without a word. In the outer room, James Maxwell required him, as prisoner, to deliver his sword. This done, he makes through a number of people towards his coach, all gazing, no man capping to him, before whom, that morning, the greatest of England would have stood uncovered."

Charles, waiting anxiously at Whitehall, whispered to himself, "I will never desert him." He remembered how he had stood by Buckingham; he was not less of a man to-day. But the wheels of time had moved, and things were more complex now. In the ensuing month, both Lord Keeper Finch and Secretary Windebank fled to escape the Parliament's wrath; and on December 18th —a brief week before the Christmas feast of peace and goodwill—the Archbishop of Canterbury was impeached. Laud was old and feeble, but the Commons did not spare

him. He must suffer now, with spirit all but broken, for the hate he had inspired in the days of his arrogance. He was committed to the Tower, and left awhile. The Commons concentrated their attention on preparing the articles of impeachment against his more vigorous friend. By February they were ready, and Charles came to the House to hear the accusation read. He talked long with Strafford, "showing him all honour," as if to protect him with that divinity which doth hedge a king. Alas, there was little but his own failings and emotions encircling Charles in these dark days. But Strafford had not lost hope. The King's kind treatment gave him real comfort, and his keen mind appreciated the difficulty his enemies would have in proving the charge of treason. He was accused of innumerable high-handed acts; some perhaps illegal, but few in essence worse than misdemeanours, and twenty misdemeanours did not make a crime. Of treason there was no proof. The earl, so it seemed to some, was "insolently confident" that he would escape at last.

The trial was to take place in Westminster Hall. It began on Sunday, March 21st, 1641. A stage had been erected in the centre of the Hall, a vacant throne at its north end with a woolsack below for the Lord Steward, Arundel, who presided. Under him sat the Lord Keeper, the judges and the clerks of Chancery. The peers in their robes sat upon forms covered with green frieze, and east and west rose tiers of benches for the Commons. At a bar in the centre was a desk for the prisoner, with his keeper, the Lieutenant of the Tower, beside him. Behind him sat his four secretaries and five or six lawyers, who could dispute questions of law but not of fact. The rest of the Hall was open to the public, who had to assemble soon after five o'clock in the morning if they wished to gain admittance. The Hall was full by seven, and some thirty minutes later the King arrived, and occupied a small room at the back of the

throne in company with the Queen and princes. "The tirlies (curtains) that made them to be secret the King broke down with his own hands, so they sat in the sight of all but little more regarded than if they had been absent." The peers did not even uncover in the King's presence; Charles could not hope thus to influence proceedings.

None the less, he never failed to attend, watching, listening, even taking notes, increasingly optimistic as Strafford's able defence gradually had its effect, oblivious to the reality of the case, as indeed were most of those present. For the reality was that Strafford must die; if not by one way, then by another. And the trial was little more than a self-imposed and half-unconscious pretence. But to those who watched, it was fraught with great possibilities of triumph and disaster. Never had the drama of a court of law, the thrilling and terrible spectacle of a man fighting for his life with only his own brains as his weapons, been so vividly portrayed. No wonder the court ladies paid high prices for the boxes above the rails, while the room next to the King's was occupied daily by French nobles. To many who watched, it remained no more than a spectacle; to two at least it was a heart-breaking tragedy. One was the man, Charles Stuart, helpless outside the fray; he who had been taught since babyhood that a King's word is law and his prerogative to pardon and protect. The other was Lady Carlisle, seeing her friend's unequal struggle with clear-sighted eyes that could not doubt the issue, and despising the King who could not save his servants.

At eight o'clock the prisoner was brought in. He came by water from the Tower. His barge made its way up stream beneath the crowded London Bridge, whence yells of hatred reached him, as people thronged to see him pass and cursed him in defeat. Below the new spire of St. Paul's, the boat swept on through open country

lovely in the spring sunshine, until at the landing-stage at Westminster, Strafford faced once more curses and jeers, and another day of conflict. For three weeks he took that journey every day and received each day a fresh reminder of earth's beauty and man's heartlessness. Maybe, in his last hours, the memory returned to him to make more easy his parting with his fellow-men, to remind him of the greater loveliness beyond. But, on the surface of his mind, he was busy on that daily journey with other thoughts, concentrating on the battle of the day, a battle into which he was putting all the vigour of his intellect and the strength of his will. There was at least a possibility of victory.

"It was daily the most glorious assembly the isle could afford," reported the Scots Commissioner, Baillie, to his wife, "yet the gravity not such as I expected." He complained that there was often much noise outside the doors, and "too loud chattering" among the Commons in the intervals between each speech, when the Lords, quieter in their talk, were equally regardless of Strafford's convenience and "got to their feet, walked and chatted" while he prepared his reply. Moreover there was "after ten, much public eating, not only of confections but of flesh and bread, bottles of beer and wine, going thick from mouth to mouth without cups, and all this in the King's eye." So the session continued till two or three in the afternoon, when the prisoner wearied in body and mind returned to the Tower for a few brief hours of rest.

Each of the articles of impeachment were taken in turn, one of the eight managers appointed by the Commons speaking upon each article and calling witnesses to prove the charge. "It was Strafford's constant custom after the end of his adversary's speech to petition for time for recollection and obtaining it, to sit down with his back to the Lords and most diligently to read his notes and write answers, he and his secretaries for

half an hour, in the midst of a general noise and confusion which continued even till he arose again to speak." Wisely, labouring under such disadvantages, he did not attempt to disprove each charge, but pleaded that none amounted to treason, or even felony. There could be little doubt that his eloquence and his mingled courage and humility of bearing, gradually won him sympathy, not merely among the court ladies, but with many Londoners of the "simpler sort." But the Commons declared it rhetoric and steeled their hearts against it.

In one thing Strafford was still the same man as of old. He had not yet learnt to curb his own hot temper. At least once he lost control of himself, storming at his accusers, defying them to prove their words. But his anger went as quickly as it had come, and as they passed on to the next charge, he bore himself as a sick man, his weary mind and his frail body refusing to obey the spur of his indomitable soul.

While he was single-handed, his opponents were eight in number, each relieving and supplementing the other, one skilled in legal knowledge, one apt in "pertinent interjections," one a "material man but not eloquent nor quick nor vehement." On the whole the earl held his own against them. So the trial went on, to the accompaniment one day of chiming bells, to celebrate the anniversary of the King's coronation. Perhaps Charles did not see the sad irony of those joyous peals; but a look of understanding may have flashed between the prisoner and the Queen. They had few illusions left. On April 5th the main charge was brought forward, based on Strafford's attitude at that fatal cabinet council, which had succeeded the close of the Short Parliament. He had urged an offensive war against Scotland; he had said "that the commonwealth was sick of peace: it will never be well till it be conquered again." He had talked of an army in Ireland "which he might employ for reducing this

Kingdom." Witnesses were summoned; casual words of the earl's were recalled and reported; all possible was done to depict clearly for the benefit of the Lords, who were the judges, that picture of Strafford that was ever before the mind's eye of the Commons and the populace. It was a picture of "Black Tom" urging the King, in those troubled critical weeks of 1640 to play the tyrant's part, to use force to stamp out rebellion, to crush for ever liberty in England.

Yet, clear as the picture was to his accusers they could not now paint it vividly. Vane, called as witness, admitted that Strafford had suggested in committee the use of the Irish army, but he was unhappy and hesitant. What Vane really felt, many wondered and nobody knew, but at least Bishop Juxon was both honest and shrewd and he declared that he had heard no such words. Hamilton and Cottington agreed with him. Northumberland was vague and Pym stirred uneasily; he had more definite proof, but he did not wish to produce it yet.

Strafford brushed the accusations aside with an impetuous and angry scorn that had its effect on his audience. He declared "that opinions might make an heretick if pertinaceous, but never a traitor, that chamber and table discourse, for argument, flim-flams and fearie-fairies could not be treasons." There was no doubt Strafford was more than holding his own.

Five days later the trial collapsed suddenly. Strafford's sickness was increasing; one morning he failed to arrive, and the day's delay irritated tempers already considerably frayed by the physical and mental exhaustion of the long trial. When he appeared at the bar on April 10th for the final summing up, a dispute arose over the question of his right to examine the witnesses. The Commons for their part requested that they might call fresh witnesses if they wished, and the Lords, trying to decide the two points fairly, agreed to equal treat-

ment ; there were to be no more witnesses on either side but any already called might be examined. There was immediately an outburst of united action on the part of the Commons, a sudden loss of control which shows how, in spite of their grave God-fearing demeanour, these Parliament-men were suffering from the nervous strain. They saw in the Lords' decision a final sign of their determination to be legally correct, which in the absence of any definite proof of treason against the earl would probably result in him slipping through their fingers. It must not be ; the trial was a useless pretence. " The Commons on both sides rose in a fury with a shout of withdraw, withdraw, withdraw, got all to their feet, on with their hats, cocked their beavers in the King's sight. We all feared it should go to a present tumult. They went all away in confusion." Strafford slipped away to his barge, " so well pleased therewith that he would not hide his joy." And Charles laughed. He did not yet understand what sort of men he was dealing with. They had not any intention of letting the earl escape.

That afternoon the Commons reassembled in St. Stephen's Chapel. They got down at once to essentials. The charge most likely to bring Strafford to the block was that of planning to employ the Irish army against England. It was rumoured that Pym and young Henry Vane had further evidence upon this point which they had not disclosed. Treason must be proved by two witnesses, and at the trial only Mr. Secretary Vane could vouch with any certainty that the fatal words had been used " to subdue this kingdom." Could Pym produce a second witness ? His followers, as determined and less restrained than he, urged him to tell all he knew. In reply he produced a copy of the notes taken by the Secretary Vane at the council-committee in question. On the other side of the House, Vane looked up in amazement. He remembered those notes. There were

no formal minutes of these cabinet committees, which differed from the full meeting of council, in this very absence of clerks and other paraphernalia. But he often jotted down notes of the discussion to aid his memory later, and in this case had thought nothing more of the paper until in the autumn the meeting of the Long Parliament was imminent. Then he had shown the notes to the King, and upon the latter's instructions had burnt them. It were best to keep nothing that threw light on those wild schemes of 1640. Vane threw the paper to the flames and he and Charles thanked their stars they had done so when that very committee meeting was discussed. Yet here, to Vane's horror, was Pym asserting that he had a copy of those very notes. Vane looked across at his son, young Sir Harry, the visionary democrat who sat by Pym's side, and who ever since he reached manhood had been a thorn in his father's side. All the energy which other young men expended on sowing their wild oats, he spent on planning Utopias, and consorting with Anabaptists. Vane the elder, conventional and worldly, was half-afraid, half scornful of him. Honourable members looked first at the secretary, then at his son. The atmosphere was taut with excitement. Through the younger Vane, Pym must have come by his copy of the notes. Was the father a traitor, or the son a thief? Young Vane rose from his seat to explain. During the recent troubles his father had journeyed north with the King, and in his absence his son had borrowed his keys to find some private document bearing on his forthcoming marriage. Sir Harry had not been adverse to a look round his father's chamber, and had noted a red velvet box. He was curious as to its contents and did not scruple to pry inside. "In some seeming disorder" he told how he had found the notes inside the box and, appreciating their significance, had shown them to Mr. Pym, who took a copy of them before Vane returned them to the casket, "having been

provoked by the tenderness of his conscience towards his common parent, his country, to trespass against his natural father." "The son no sooner sat down than the father (who without any counterfeiting had a natural appearance of sternness) rose with a pretty confusion. . . . The scene was so well acted, with such passion and gestures, between the father and son," that the House commended the younger Vane's integrity and begged the father and son to make friends. But for some time in public there was "great distance observed between them."

Thus wrote Hyde in later years remembering how he had doubted the genuineness of a "very ridiculous" story. Yet true in essentials it must have been, though Vane's dismay may have been simulated. It did not miss the notice of the anxious watchers at Whitehall that again it was the secretary who, by carelessness if not intent, had rendered certain Strafford's doom.

For the notes, which Secretary Vane admitted were a correct copy of those he had burnt, proved damning evidence. This was a very different matter from trusting to the memory of one hostile witness. There under the heading "Llt. Ir.," which could only mean Lieutenant of Ireland, was written the words "Absolved from rules of Government. Prosecute the war vigorously, an army in Ireland to subdue this kingdom." There had been a nefarious design to impose a tyranny by means of a foreign army. Was it likely that the Commons would let escape the man who had planned these things. Under the fiery guidance of Sir Arthur Haslerigg a Bill of Attainder was introduced, which declared Strafford guilty of treason. It passed its first reading immediately. But Pym was a constitutionalist through and through, and he was never impatient. Like Strafford, he would consider himself "absolved from rules of government," if only thus could he gain his end, but first legal means must be tried to the utmost. He persuaded the

Commons not yet to throw over the impeachment. A final meeting was arranged in Westminster Hall. But the spirit had gone out of the trial, the threat of attainder in the background made it a mere formality.

In a great final speech, however, Strafford justified if he could not save himself. He spoke for two and a half hours, flagging for a short while in the middle, then closing with a magnificent peroration that made even the critical Baillie cry, "The matter and expression was exceeding brave, doubtless, if he had grace or civil goodness, he is a most eloquent man." Once, as he spoke of his first wife, he broke off in tears and was silent; for the rest, he did not falter. There were few who were not moved as he spake his last words, "and so, my lords, even so, with all humility and with all tranquillity of mind, I do submit myself clearly and freely to your judgments, and whether that righteous judgment shall be life or death 'Te deum laudamus, te dominum confitemur.'"

Glyn, one of the managers, spoke next in a speech of three hours' length, that tired himself and bored everybody else. Charles, silent through Strafford's speech, was silent still. Who knows what wearying thoughts circled round his mind as he brooded on the past and groped towards the tragic realization that the earl's good fight had done harm rather than good. Hitherto Charles had no choice of action; he was perforce a helpless bystander; but now he would have to participate. If the Commons proceeded by Bill of Attainder his assent would be necessary to transform that Bill into Act of Parliament and to kill the earl. But he could withhold his assent; of course, he would withhold his assent! But why, oh, why had fate forced him into such an unhappy pass? Said Henrietta: "We will save him." Her mind was full of hare-brained plans that some soldiers of the Northern Army had engendered. Charles kept silence; he had little faith in

plots, and less in the Queen's soldier-courtier friends. Then he was stirred to attention. For Pym was speaking. He only spoke for half an hour, and "to humble the man," so Baillie quaintly puts it, "God let his memory fail him a little before the end. His papers he looked on, but they could not help him to a point or two, so he behoved to pass on." Yet this man who fumbled with his notes and had none of Strafford's rhetoric had a quiet strength of purpose about him, a sincerity that radiated from him so that all listened with respect to what he said. It was, quoth the Scot, "one of the most eloquent wise free speeches that ever we heard . . . I believe the King never heard a lecture of so free language against that his idolized prerogatives."

In effect the trial was over. Strafford was still safe, but he had won a barren victory. A week after the final session in Westminster Hall, the Bill of Attainder passed to its third reading in the Commons by two hundred and four votes to fifty-nine.

The Bill of Attainder passed up to the House of Lords. The Commons chafed under the delay, while the Peers hesitated. A few were as inveterate in their hate as Pym himself; but many sympathized a little with Strafford and a great deal with the King, and were conscious of the danger of a precedent that might one day ruin any one of them. Among the latter was the Earl of Bedford, the head of that house of Russell always associated with liberal principles combined with moderation. Charles, looking this way and that for an escape from his predicament, struck upon the idea of forming a moderate government with Bedford at its head. Rumours ran amok; it was said that Pym himself was to accept office, that Lord Say was to replace Cottington, that Charles was, indeed, to steal his opponents' thunder. Nor was the King merely pressing for a tactical advantage. He would prefer very much the rôle of a popular ruler. With Strafford in exile (but alive, so that his ghost would

not haunt his master's honour), and with moderate men to advise him (but gentlemen, like the Earl of Bedford or young Digby, the Earl of Bristol's son, who had voted in the minority against the Attainder), he might regain once more that haven of quiet for which he longed. So Charles made his plans and the adverse fate who watched his struggles mocked his hopes and struck down Bedford with the smallpox.

Bedford died, and Charles' schemes died also ; it was still too early for the formation of a middle party. Strafford, himself, stood in the way. Before he fell ill, Bedford had tried to persuade Essex that the Lord-Lieutenant's banishment would be a merciful alternative to death. Essex' reply brooked no further argument. "Stone-dead hath no fellow," he commented tersely. Charles, sensing this spirit in the air, found it impossible to await quietly the Lords' decision. He failed to keep silence at the very moment when silence would have stood him in good stead, when a dignified trust in the peers of England might have called forth a response of loyalty to his will.

Yet his act, if ill-advised, was at least honest. On Saturday, May 1st, he went to the House of Lords and summoned the Commons to his presence. As Black Rod knocked, murmurs of anxiety and alarm arose in the Lower House. Did this mean a dissolution, and, if so, what next? Surely, violence! But Black Rod reassured them with a smile, and they trooped into the Upper House.

There the King endeavoured to assure them that he had never been advised to subvert the laws nor to employ the Irish army in England, and appealing to the Lords, he prayed that justice might be done and himself preserved from betraying his own conscience. Let those who thought Strafford guilty condemn him only for misdemeanour. It was a pitiful sight, a King pleading with his subjects, to help him save his honour. He

might well hope that some chord of pity would be struck. Yet Strafford, who had sent his brother to Charles to try to dissuade him from the appeal, had been a Parliament-man and knew well what would happen. Charles thought of himself as a king stepping down from the throne to appeal as a man to his fellow-men. The Commons thought that he was exerting his kingly authority to influence the Lords in a matter under deliberation in Parliament. They were amazed and angry. The Lords felt that their independence had been assailed and were as dismayed as their colleagues.

Charles had gained nothing. But wild talk and foolish schemes emanating from that hot-bed of intrigue and foolhardiness " the Queen's side " had hardened the hearts of the hesitant peers. Charles himself, not able to withstand his wife's unhappy influence, had declared that he could not disband the hated Irish army in the present state of affairs, and had thus added fuel to the fire of suspicion and alarm that was flaming in London, so that trade was at a standstill and anxious crowds of citizens and shopkeepers thronged the ways of Westminster and Whitehall.

It was a terrible week. It began, like a strange dream, quickly changing to a nightmare, with a royal wedding. On Sunday, May 2nd, the little Princess Mary was married to the young Prince of Orange. The match had been hastily concluded in the previous February. Charles had put aside ruefully his romantic vision of a Spanish match for his elder daughter, and hoped that at least Dutch money might be his to borrow, if his subjects proved too recalcitrant. But Henrietta persisted in thinking the alliance unworthy and the young Elector who had newly returned to England, sulked, because he was not the bridegroom, and would not attend the wedding banquet. A presentiment of tragedy darkened the festive day. The little bride, attended by a bevy of " ladies of her own age of nine or ten years

all in cloth of silver" was led into the King's chapel by her brothers, the Prince of Wales and Duke of York, the latter a shy silent lad, the former precocious and assured for his eleven years, about to play his first part in the affairs of state. "At night before all the court" the young couple "went to bed in the Queen's chamber. A little after the King and Queen had bid the bridegroom good-night as their son, he—as it was appointed—arose and went to his bed in the King's chamber." A few days later he returned to Holland whither Mary, a delicate child, was to follow when she was a little older.

Thus Sunday passed. But men's minds were not set on marriages. That very morning a certain Captain Billingsley, with a troop of soldiers behind him had appeared at the Tower and demanded entrance in the King's name. The Lieutenant, loyal to his trust to Parliament, refused to open; not in this way should Strafford be allowed to make his escape. The incident only convinced any who still doubted of the need of quick action. All Monday crowds surrounded the entrance to the House of Lords. It was a mob composed not of the riff-raff of the town, but of worthy citizens and shopkeepers of standing. As every lord passed in and out, the people cried "in a loud and hideous voice for justice against Strafford" and all traitors. On Wednesday, in a House of Commons so distraught that when a board creaked some cried out "Guy Fawkes," Pym, a consummate tactician, disclosed his knowledge of an army plot. How true his information was and what exactly lay behind it, it is hard to say. Some time before, Henry Percy had shown to Charles a petition subscribed by various officers in the army in Yorkshire, declaring their determination to stand by the King against further attacks upon his prerogative and the established Church. Charles had approved the petition, and felt grateful for any expression of loyalty in these unthankful

times. But others, less scrupulous than Percy's friends, were prepared to cut the Gordian knot of present difficulties by a *coup d'état*. They too hoped to be backed by the army from the north, and they too were active in Whitehall. The Queen's favourite, Henry Jermyn, Suckling, the feather-brained poet, Goring, the dissolute and unprincipled soldier, were all busy with a scheme upon which Henrietta smiled and which Charles, though he disapproved, did not crush with vigour. The seizure of Portsmouth and help from France figured in the plot. Goring, out for his own ends, was refused the command of the army by the other officers and told all he knew, and more to Pym. The latter said nothing, till it became necessary to provide some impetus to the Lords in the matter of the attainder. Hence his disclosure of his knowledge on Wednesday, May 5th. That night, the plotters fled, including Percy whose scheme was confused by rumours with the wilder plan. Next day rumour said that the Queen would like to follow her friends. Charles was requested not to allow her to leave Whitehall, and her servants were arrested. The King was very "sad and pensive" but the Queen was furious. "I am my father's daughter," she cried. "He never knew how to fly, and I am not going to learn the lesson now."

On Saturday, May 8th, in a very thin House the Lords passed the Bill of Attainder by some thirty-five votes to eleven. Billingsley's attempt on the Tower and the knowledge of an army plot confused and incorrect though it might be, had changed the situation. If Charles were ready to use force and was attempting to free Strafford to command his armies, it was waste of time considering the King's suggestion of banishment instead of death. By Strafford's death alone could the safety of the kingdom be assured. So thought the great majority.

The Bill now only needed the King's assent to make

it law. Triumphantly the Houses bore it to Whitehall, and behind peers and Parliament-men surged a crowd some two thousand strong, determined that the traitor should not slip through their fingers now. Many bore arms, and their threatening shouts pierced through walls and windows, and reached the Queen in her oratory and the King in his council-chamber. Then would have been the moment for a bold and unconsidered "No!" The longer Charles hesitated the harder it would be to say. Thought would only remind him of what the angry mob might do; not only he would suffer, but his dear ones, his wife and the little girl who had been a happy bride the week before. Charles checked himself; he had already begun to think. "I will tell them on Monday," he said. Surely somebody could find a way out.

In this hour of extremity, Strafford wrote to him, begging him to give way for the sake of his kingdom and to sacrifice his servant in the cause of peace. He had written sincerely. In his lonely prison hours, he thought of the King, distraught and agitated with no lieutenant now to give him strong counsel. His heart yearned towards his stricken master, and he wrote, striving to make his course more easy. Yet, in the wakeful watches of the night that followed, the vision which had inspired him since his youth of a just and noble King rose again before him, and comforted him. No King worth the name could do that which he had suggested. He would not be sacrificed.

But to Charles at Whitehall, the letter came as sorely-needed solace. He had promised Strafford when he left Yorkshire that no hair of his head should be hurt. He had written again at the close of the trial, "Upon the word of a King you shall not suffer in life, honour or fortune." Here, in the earl's letter was formal absolution from his promise. Strafford himself declared him free of it. Charles swayed pitiably. He was, after all

the King, his kingdom must come first, and if its welfare required Strafford's death maybe he ought to give way. He would seek his councillors' advice. So, on that Sabbath May morning, the Council deliberated, and some through fear and some through guile and a few, maybe, because they thought the King's conscience mattered less than the kingdom's peace, advised Charles to give his assent to the Bill. Then he turned to the bishops, and of them, too, most urged him to give way. But one stood firm. Bishop Juxon knew nothing of reasons of state, and *force majeure*; he dealt only in honest rights and wrongs. He bade Charles resist.

So, miserably, the day wore on, and still the mob pressed on the palace gates, and their shouts and yells sent pale-faced servants cowering down the back stairs, and made even the bishops tremble beneath their robes.

There was only one person who could have screwed Charles' courage to the sticking-point. That was Henrietta. And her nerve had gone. There needs no other proof of the extremity of the danger that she who never flinched before or after, on this day lost her courage. It was not only fear for herself, though what woman would not fear before a mob rendered inhuman by a lust for vengeance. There were the children—the baby prince, his little sisters, the two boys whose life lay fair before them. She said no word to urge resistance, and, by her terror, she robbed Charles of his manliness. At nine o'clock, worn out by a day of unimaginable distress, he gave up the struggle. Strafford must die. Next morning, quibbling to the last, he delegated his authority to a commission, who assented to the Bill.

It was an ignoble surrender and afterwards Charles never tried to excuse himself. "I sinned against my conscience," he told the Queen, "it was a base sinful concession." It was the one act of his life for which he remained consistently and sincerely ashamed, and that shame is his best apology.

When Strafford heard his sentence the natural heat of his temper broke forth in the cry " Put not your trust in princes." But he said no more, and his last noble letter to his son remembered only Charles' favours in the past. The King made desperate efforts to the end. A letter of entreaty to the Peers was borne to the House by the young Prince of Wales. It pleaded at least for delay. But " justice " took its course. On Thursday, May 12th, Strafford died on Tower Hill. As he went to the scaffold, he passed below the cell where his old friend, Laud, was captive. Looking up at the narrow window, he saw two trembling hands stretched out in blessing. He passed on comforted. He did not know that as he went, Laud, feeble from age and overcome with grief, fell back fainting in his attendant's arms. The old man was still in the vale of tears, but Strafford walked confidently on the highroad to salvation. The excited crowds, thronging the scaffold, saw no miscreant perish wretchedly; they watched a gallant gentleman submit without flinching to his end. They were touched in spite of themselves. But " Black Tom " was dead, and there was an end of it. Gentlemen who had come up to town to see the show, rode home into the country waving their hats and crying " His head is off! His head is off! " The sweetness of the May evening was bruised by their shouting. And in a room in a palace a King faced the judgment-seat of his own conscience and knew himself no true man. Whatever might befall in the dark, uncertain future, he had drunk the bitterest cup that fate could hold for him.

CHAPTER IX

PYM

" 'Tis Pym, 'tis Pym, and his colleagues,
That did our woe engender."—*Contemporary Ballad.*

THERE were many anxious women in England as the spring of 1641 gave place to the heat and weariness of summer. There were many like Dame Margaret Verney, whose husband, Sir Edmund, was bound to the Crown by years of loyal service, but whose son Ralph took food to Westminster that he need not rush out for his dinner, and respected John Pym more than any bishop, or any king. There were many who strove in vain to close up the breach which thus widened daily in their family life; others, whose sons were young, felt fear clutch at their hearts when hot heads began to hint that civil war alone could be the end. But none there were more wretched and unhappy than Henrietta, the Queen. Small things combined with great to distress her. Young Prince Charles fell from his horse in Hyde Park and broke his arm; the Queen-Mother of France, who had resided wretchedly with her daughter for some years, now at last took her leave, fearful to stay longer among the tumultuous Londoners, and going she knew not whither to face a lonely death. Nor was her mother the only friend Henrietta lost. In that tragic week before Strafford's execution, the flight of the courtiers implicated in the army plots had robbed her of Suckling, the poet, so graceful in his verses, so graceless in his ways; of hot-headed Henry Percy, and, above all, of Jermyn, Henrietta's own special friend. The Queen's side at Whitehall seemed strangely empty without them. Eager tongues were ready to whisper that she and Jermyn cherished a dishonourable intimacy—impossible

calumny; and yet—it may have been that now that he was gone, Henrietta indulged the grief that was her only solace, imagining herself more in love with him than she had ever been in his presence. Moreover, she regretted the plots themselves or rather their failure; she was unmoved by the thought that their discovery had done Charles' reputation untold harm. But the scheme—how splendid it would have been in fruition; the march south of the army under Newcastle, with the Prince as the figure-head; the seizure of Portsmouth, the ships and men from France—and all had come to nothing! "The Queen is tortured by cruel distress, and even her spirited nature has not been able to prevent her eyes from performing their tender office": so the Venetian ambassador reported to Italy.

The King was small comfort to her at the moment. Just as his numbed senses were beginning to come to life after the horror of Strafford's death, he was deeply hurt by Northumberland's defection. The latter, who was in sympathy with the moderate reformers, had been sincerely grieved by his brother's implication in the army plots, and when Harry Percy wrote, telling him all he knew and his own share in the less obnoxious plan, Northumberland felt it his duty to send on the letter to Pym, with whom he was on friendly terms. Charles considered this frank disloyalty and caring for Northumberland as he did, more than he had ever cared for Strafford, he felt his conduct keenly. He had courted him, he said "as his mistress and conversed with him as his friend without the least interruption or intermission of all possible favour and kindness." Even now, he allowed him to remain Lord Admiral, with a generosity that was to cost him dear. Northumberland, for his part, was sick with wretchedness. He had never been well since his collapse at the time of the second Scottish war. He retired to Bath, there to recover his health and to quieten his conscience, perturbed by the

conflicting loyalties of personal friendship and political principle.

His sister, being a woman, found it harder to disentangle personalities from politics. Strafford had been her friend, and the court had betrayed Strafford. That was enough. She renewed her old acquaintanceship with Pym, who was at least a man—and man enough to be susceptible to the charms of a witty woman! Lucy found a thrill, seldom captured after forty years of life, in seeing this iron-spirited leader, whose shibboleth was hard work and who let neither feelings nor qualms of conscience deter him from following the course he had set himself, respond to her friendship and enjoy her company. Gossip said that she went to sermons nowadays and her piety was manifested in the notes she took at the preachings. Perhaps gossip was malicious, and she found no cause as yet to resign her position in the Queen's bedchamber. Rather she made use of the knowledge thus obtained to ingratiate herself with her new admirer. Through Lucy as through many other sources Pym heard of all that passed at Whitehall. And the air was full of rumours.

Had Charles been able to adopt a consistent policy whether of compromise or of defiance, he might have saved the remnant of his prerogative. It was said that when Pym heard of the King's assent to Strafford's Attainder, he cried, "Now he will refuse me nothing." The story sprang, no doubt, from the anxious ranks of the King's friends, who saw him at the same time agreeing to a Bill which prohibited the dissolution of the present Parliament without its own consent. He who had been born and bred the champion of Divine Right seemed to be bartering away his kingship—for nothing! His patient resignation, his anxiety to maintain peace, puzzled his friends and irritated his wife. The Spanish ambassador urged him in good round terms to resist the proved temerity of his subjects. Sir Philip Warwick

summing up the court's attitude, wrote of him at this crisis : " Had his active courage equalled his passive the rebellious and tumultuous humour of those who were disloyal to him had been quashed in their first rise, for, throughout the English story it may be observed that the soldier-like spirit in the prince hath been ever much more fortunate and esteemed than the pious."

And yet it is probable that Charles was right, and the hot-heads at Whitehall were wrong ; and this from the point of view of the statesman, as well as the Christian ! A new spirit was abroad at Westminster ; men who had come up in the previous autumn, determined that the tyrannies of the eleven years rule must be for ever discontinued were beginning to feel that their work was done, and that Charles had suffered enough. Thoughtful men, contemplating the work of the last nine months, had on the whole cause to be well-content. The progress which had been made satisfied not only Parliamentarians like Pym and Hampden, republicans like the younger Vane, and practical opportunists like Cromwell, but also such as Hyde who desired a balance of power between Crown and Parliament. The King's prerogative had been restricted but not extinguished ; the Star Chamber and ecclesiastical courts had been abolished ; the future of Parliament had been assured by the passing of the Triennial Acts. The unworthy shifts and petty tyrannies whereby Portland and his successors had filled the Treasury had been declared illegal. In July, rumours were again rife that the King intended to form a moderate government. Essex became Lord Chamberlain, and Lord Saye replaced Cottington as Master of the Wards. That inscrutable courtier escaped the flood of hatred which had overwhelmed most of his colleagues, driving them to flight or imprisonment. Resigning his other post of Chancellor of the Exchequer, he retired into private life, and succeeded by his " Brer Rabbit " attitude in avoiding " the least disturbance."

In July it was said that Pym would be the new Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Holles, principal Secretary of State. That such an eventuality should be possible shows that Charles had not compromised in vain. He had given up all but his fundamental rights, the age-long and acknowledged powers of kingship. Any further attack must be levelled against those rights and those who attacked would be no longer the preservers of the liberties of England, but the aggressors, introducing new and alarming ideas, the ultimate development of which could only be republicanism. Up till now, the Commons had been the champions of the law; henceforward, the law would be on the side of the King. It had been necessary to stretch it to get rid of Strafford; the process once begun went inexorably on. No wonder Pym hesitated; love of the law was in his very blood. To cast legality aside was akin to cutting off a limb. In that summer of 1641, Pym might have been ready to serve his King, and make peace on the basis of the accomplished fact. But Charles' concessions had not changed his personality. He offended his subjects at the critical moment by his journey to Scotland. The old mistrust of him revived. By the time he returned something greater than politics, religion, dominated and embittered the situation. Pym accepted the inevitable, and went straight on.

It was tragic that just at this crisis, when his concessions had made their mark, Charles should have been inveigled again into intrigue, and that Henrietta, losing her slight stock of patience, began to busy herself again with bold but impracticable schemes. She planned a secret journey to Holland; she contemplated taking the Crown jewels with her; she collogued with the French ambassador and sent appeals to the Pope, and every new concession of Charles irritated her afresh, till she fell sick through anxiety and almost forgot politics in a genuine desire for her native land and the refreshing

waters of some French spa. But her schemes and her longings passed alike through the eager tongue of Lucy of Carlisle to the knowledge of John Pym, and Henrietta found herself forbidden to touch the Crown jewels, forbidden to go either to Holland or France, and it did no good to cry that "she was prepared to obey the King but not four hundred of his subjects as this did not befit her spirit or her birth." She had to be content to visit an English watering-place that summer, and regretted perhaps, as she sauntered the empty weeks away, that Jermyn was not with her.

For Charles had gone to Scotland. Just as the Queen's thoughts turned to France, so he, wretched and ill at ease, felt the call of Scotland and wondered if he might find salvation in the land of his fathers. There was much to be said politically for a visit to Scotland, where Argyll's arrogance had alienated many of the nobles, where Montrose was eager to maintain a vestige of kingly power, and where a moderate party might be built up ready to serve loyally a King, who, whatever his failings, was a Scot to the core. Moreover, all had not gone well with the Scottish Commissioners in London, and their enthusiasm for the English Parliament was somewhat diminished. Money matters were difficult, and disbanding was still delayed. Two armies still faced each other in the north of England, and both were weary of inaction, and impatient of the civilians at Westminster. The wilder spirits at court talked of Charles' great opportunity. In a few weeks he might return to London with an armed force behind him and a united Scotland in his rear. It was little wonder that Parliament was dismayed at the idea of the King's journey. The fact that its purpose was vague, and its possibilities unfathomed, only made it seem the more dangerous to men already over-strained, tired out by the heat and smells of the London August. The hopeful atmosphere of the previous month vanished; all

again was rumour and suspicion. But the visit meant too much to Charles for him to relinquish it. He hoped much from it; yet it was more than a political expedient. He was homesick for Scotland, that summer. When the Commons tried to dissuade him, when some even suggested a demonstration of twenty thousand working men to give force to their dissuasions, he cried out that "he meant to go whatever happened and he would give those who laid hand on his horse's bridle cause to regret it." No great train accompanied him on this occasion; he left the English lords behind him and only Richmond and some other Scots went with him. He postponed his journey unwillingly, till some bills pending in Parliament were ready for his assent; but on the morning of Tuesday, August 10th, he came into the House at ten o'clock, carelessly surrendered some more of his prerogative as he hurriedly assented to the bills, and by eleven was in his post-coach and away north, to the peturbation of the Commons and his own content. Nor had he been to bed the night beforehand, so eager was he that all should be in readiness, that nothing should frustrate his longing for the fresh air, the closer loyalties of the north.

At Newcastle, he passed through the Scottish troops, and was entertained by Leslie, upon whom his quiet dignity made a great impression. At long last the Scottish army was disbanding. They left England quietly and thankfully, though not without an occasional disturbance. "There was a great disorder upon their marching out of Durham," wrote one correspondent. "I hear a Major with some others was killed; the general (Leslie) went himself to appease the business. Money was the cause of the disorder. It seems the Highlanders, who were the men who made the dispute, had not such satisfaction as they expected." It was these men who returned to their glens and mountain homes by way of Edinburgh, and saw there the King, gracious, kindly,

hard-working, endeavouring to settle the Church and state of his native land according to the wishes of the majority. All the lures of royalty drew them to him, and personal affection for one, who like themselves, had found the south unfriendly. They went home, and a year or two later, many came forth again, at the call of the pipes, to follow Montrose to death and glory in the cause of their King.

For the moment all parties were united in admiring Charles. The general Leslie, the preacher Henderson, Argyll, the red-headed Campbell, all came to court. "His Majesty's care and diligence to dispatch is such that no time is lost, being every morning in Parliament, and the rest of the day in continual agitation, directing and disposing himself, all his affairs. He is also pleased to take the prayers and preaching according to the form of the Scottish Church." And meanwhile, Edinburgh echoed the spirit of Holyrood, and at a city banquet the Provost "like a plain Dutch host" drank the health of the royal family and bade Charles pledge him in return, "and so in this Scotch familiar way but with a great deal of cordiality" made the King welcome.

In comparison, the close of the session at Westminster was drab and wearisome. A last burst of anger at Charles' insistence on his Scottish journey had resulted in Suckling, Jermyn and the less blameworthy Percy alike being declared traitors. Henrietta was insulted, but it made little difference to the actual situation. A summer lethargy began to creep over the Houses; the squires thought of their fields ripe for harvesting. "Our Parliament yet sits; they do nothing new but fall upon old businesses, especially the bishops." It was a matter of serious import, one upon which petitions and counter-petitions had long been pouring into the King and both Houses, this question of the government of the Church and whether if bishops were retained they should lose all political power, including their seats in the House of

Lords. It was a matter on which Pym disagreed with Falkland on one hand, with young Vane on the other. It was no matter for settlement in the sleepy month of August. As soon as the King was safely past the armies and Leslie began his retreat into Scotland the Houses dispersed until the late autumn. Most of what they had accomplished was to survive the trouble of the next two decades; there remained two insoluble problems which even Pym might shrink from facing. One was religion; the other, the King's own self. He being what he was, how would the government of the realm be carried on when the Commons dispersed? How far was it the business of Parliament to control the King's government? If kingship were not absolute, how could such control be effectively administered. Country gentlemen could not be experts in political theory. It seemed to Northumberland that August, that "we were never fuller of jealousies than we were at present, nor less hopeful of avoiding a confusion." Another humorous observer put forward some "facetious questions, to be decided by a Committee of the House of Commons." These were some of them:—

"Whether it be treason to be for or against the King . . . whether the subjects must rule the King or the King the subjects . . . whether there be any readier way to strengthen Popery than to divide the Protestant party by the independent government of particular churches . . . whether we go not about to pull down church and state in the fear of God? Whether we have as much skill in building up as pulling down?"

In that final question lay the rub. For the moment, Charles, relying on his rightful prerogatives and his own virtues of patience and gentleness, held the better cards. But Pym was still at work! Before Parliament dispersed, at his instigation four members of the House of Commons and two peers were appointed to follow the King to Edinburgh. Their purpose, thinly-veiled, was

to keep a watch on Charles' doings and to report any signs of intrigue. The indignity of their presence woke the King rudely from his dream. Already in his intercourse with the Scottish Parliament, his illusions were dwindling. The influence of Argyll, the Campbell, was unshaken; the Scots Parliament would only accept such leaders as he approved, and Charles' attempt to make Morton treasurer was unavailing. Hamilton, who had instigated the idea of a Presbyterian-Royalist alliance, could make no headway, and did not get beyond a specious friendship with the Covenanting leaders, which shook even the King's faith in his loyalty. It seemed to those who looked through the show of things to the reality beneath, that in effect, Charles was " a vanquished person " with no alternative but to agree to any course proposed to him. One such observer, writing to Ormonde in Ireland, declared that never was a king " so much insulted over! It would pity any man's heart to see how he looks; for he is never at quiet amongst them, and glad he is when he sees any man that he thinks loves him." He turned naturally to Montrose, the very type of man to attract Charles personally, gallant, well-favoured, and self-assured. " Montrose and Argyll, like Cæsar and Pompey, the one would endure no superior and the other would have no equal." And Argyll for the time being dominated the scene, winning over Hamilton, and imprisoning Montrose in Edinburgh Castle, whence he sent mysterious letters to Charles, warning him against the Campbell, and urging that he should be brought to justice.

One day in October, Argyll and Hamilton suddenly withdrew from court. Charles sent for them, but they begged to be excused. They had, it seemed, been warned by General Leslie of a plot against their lives. Some idle talk among the officers of the guard had given rise to rumours, which had been substantiated by an unguarded remark of one of the suspected assailants. The

officers had communicated their suspicions to Leslie, who warned Argyll and Hamilton instead of going directly to the King. The noblemen, canny Scotsmen, were not averse to cultivating rumours which would reinforce their popularity at the expense of the King's and made the most of the danger they might be in. When, on October 14th, Charles rode to Parliament with five hundred gentlemen guarding his horse, among them the chief enemies of the Campbell clan, Argyll and Hamilton rode out to one of the latter's country houses, and professed themselves in too great peril to obey the King's order to attend. Charles was indignant and with reason. He showed unusual shrewdness in his comment "since Scotsmen were not much subject to fear there must be some other and worse reason for it which was to cause division between him and his people." He considered that Hamilton "had put a disgrace upon him by distrusting him." For Argyll he had never cared, and the short-lived attempt at cordiality died a natural death, and with it any possibility of Charles re-establishing his position in England with the aid of a loyal and united Scotland. With Hamilton it was different. He had been a close friend, and Charles recalled, with tears in his eyes, how he had protected Hamilton when his enemies had charged him with treason in his youth. This insult was a poor return for past favours; Charles was chagrined, and though, in a week's time, he received a long letter of apology from his friend, forgiveness was not to be won so easily. In November, onlookers were still wondering if Hamilton's eager endeavours to regain his old position would succeed. If he did recover favour, one news-writer commented "the world will say the King is bewitched to him, but as yet he will not hear of him."

For Charles at the moment was breaking away from the policy of compromise for which, in the main, Hamilton had stood in Scotland. After all, it seemed to

have accomplished as little there as in England. It might please his opponents, but only so long as the concessions were all on the same side. Neither Argyll nor Pym showed the least inclination to respond to it by a similar readiness to give way. In mid-November Charles left Scotland, maintaining to the end the pretence of success. "He departed a contented King from a contented people." But if he seemed more self-possessed, quieter in mind and bolder in spirit than he had done on arrival, it was not because he had succeeded in his plans. Rather it was because the total failure of his conciliatory policy in both countries had made clear to him the futility of concessions. He had attended the Covenanters' services only to contrast them in his secret thoughts with the liturgy he loved. His mind was made up on the question that was likely to dominate all other questions in the immediate future. He would not give up the bishops nor the Book of Common Prayer. He would act with decision, as Henrietta, as Montrose wished, as Strafford would have wished, had he been spared.

It seemed as if, at last, fortune were smiling on him. There could be no doubt that there was a new spirit abroad in London. The City was wearying of the Parliament. "Privilege" was all very well, but when it prevented an honest merchant from arresting a Parliament-man for debt it had its disadvantages. The City was owed two million sterling by the Upper House alone. Moreover, the unsettled state of the kingdom had ruined foreign trade. There was much to be said after all for the peaceful days when Charles had ruled slackly but not corruptly, and no officious Commons interfered. The inevitable swing of the pendulum was taking place; and men of property began to meditate that trade was as important as this much-vaunted liberty.

So it came to pass that when Charles returned from Scotland in November he was met by the Queen and her

children at Theobalds, and rode in triumph into London. It was wonderful to be met by cheers instead of frowns, to be escorted from Stamford Hill by sheriffs and "javelin men in scarlet cloaks and feathered hats," to be greeted by the Mayor whom the King duly knighted, and by the noblemen of the court, whose open, English faces it was good to see again. It was splendid to ride in procession to the Guildhall, with the solid support behind him of "citizens in velvet coats with chains of gold about their necks." All was "very stately and well" although the present which rumour said was to be made to the King was not forthcoming. Charles and his Queen, however, withdrew to the quiet beauty of Hampton Court, and in the joy of meeting again, and the excitement of their triumph, planned a bold front against their enemies.

But already that had happened in November, which stemmed the tide that was running in the King's favour, and roused emotions too violent for the most politic of sovereigns to control. The Catholics in Ireland, who had borne the brunt of Strafford's harsh rule without enjoying the advantages of its efficiency, broke into wild revolt. A plan to capture Dublin and seize the reins of power only failed because of a last-minute warning given by one of the conspirators. Dublin was saved, but in the north of Ireland, among the fierce O'Neills, the revolt took its course. Religious and racial hatred threw off all the trammels of civilization. The wild tribesmen "ravaged the country, where they went murdering, ravishing, burning . . ." The news came quickly to the Houses at Westminster and to Charles, still at Edinburgh. It came with manifold exaggerations, and there were few who did not believe that the Papists had planned "to cut the throats of all the Protestants in Ireland."

Charles was playing chess when the news was brought to him. He made no comment, and went on with his game. So had he continued his devotions when he heard of Buckingham's murder! Did he realize, now as

then, what had befallen him; or did his imagination fail him once again?

The Irish rebellion had roused again in all its fury the old Catholic bogey; zealous Protestants scarcely dared to sleep at night lest they should be murdered in their beds. The mistrust of the Queen turned to active hatred. Who knew what devilish plots she might not contrive? The bishops were an insidious danger as cloaks for popery; and the King, as their champion, was unworthy of his office, since he betrayed his people's faith. Some even asserted that the rebels had acted with royal authority, so wild were the rumours, so heated the passions of men, and the slow reaction in Charles' favour was swept away by a tide of fear and suspicion.

The King was as anxious as his subjects to crush the rebellion, and endeavoured at once to raise forces for this purpose both in Scotland and England. Yet, instead of this being accounted to him for virtue, it increased the general perturbation.

At a time when Westminster was "a warm region where thunder and lightning is made," when the King was resolved on firmness, and tempers were high among the people, an armed force had to come into existence. And neither side dared trust the other with its control. Thus it was that during these last fevered months of ordered government the two questions of religion and the army, the bishops and the militia, divided the once united Commons into two parties, while in the town, irresponsible spirits taunted each other as Cavaliers and Roundheads and paved the way for the open war that gradually became inevitable.

The growth of the new Royalist party in the Commons was connected with the passing of a bill to exclude bishops from the House of Lords. It was clear from the debates that there were many whose love for the established Church bound them together in opposition to their former friends. The versatile Digby was now

a constant visitor at court, where his glamour did not fail to attract the attention of the Queen, bereft of her former favourites. He was too unstable, however, to lead others, and the new Royalists turned for guidance to the two friends who faced Pym and Hampden across the floor of the House—to Hyde, with his legal mind, his abounding self-confidence and his flair for statecraft, and to Falkland, the only man he loved better than himself. A philosopher and visionary, of exceedingly small stature and undistinguished looks, Falkland had impressed the men of action about him by the sweet tranquillity of his mind, and the charm of a personality which in the happy days before the troubles, had radiated from his Berkshire home. In the house and garden at Great Tew, his friends of the Church and the law—Sheldon, Hales, Chillingworth and the rest—had met as at a "university situate in a purer air." There they talked the clock round, came and went at will, ate when they listed, slept the sleep of the pure in heart, and read and wrote among the sights and sounds and smells of the Cotswold foothills. It had been a good life, and Falkland relinquished it with regret at the call of public affairs. He did not falter, however, in taking his share in the destruction of the King's usurped power; he even went further than his friend, Ned Hyde, in voting for Strafford's attainder, but when the Church for which he cared more than for any politics was attacked, his path parted for ever from that pursued relentlessly by Pym and Hampden. With growing distress of mind, but with no thought of turning back, he found himself ranked by the King's side, in defence of the faith they both loved.

On the other side, Pym was forced to look increasingly to the younger men for support. In the spring a bill providing for the total abolition of episcopacy had been introduced in the Commons, and passed two readings by a small majority before the adjournment in August

prevented it going further. A man of no importance was the formal sponsor of the Bill, but the real promoters, so it was rumoured in the House, were young Harry Vane the fanatic, and his friend, Oliver Cromwell. Everybody knew Oliver, and most of them liked him; broad-shouldered and rough-spoken, he brought a breath of the country into St. Stephen's narrow walls; vehement and merciless in his attacks on the government he was yet kindly and modest in his bearing to his friends. He talked good common-sense, and respected the word of God. He was not like young Vane, tormented by visions of the great schemes he wished to accomplish but could not. He was content to grasp the reality of the moment and see the next job done. "I can tell you Sirs what I would not have," he exclaimed, "though I cannot what I would." And so he remained in the background, attacking with solid sincerity all that seemed to him to smack of tyranny in Church and state. On one occasion, Philip Warwick heard him speak. "We courtiers valued ourselves much upon our good clothes," writes Warwick naïvely, and added, "I came one morning into the House well-clad and perceived a gentleman speaking (whom I knew not) very ordinarily apparelled, for it was a plain cloth suit, which seemed to have been made by an ill country tailor: his linen was plain and not very clean, and I remember a speck or two of blood upon his little band, which was not much larger than his collar; his hat was without a hat-band, his stature was of a good size, his sword stuck close to his side, his countenance swollen and reddish, his voice sharp and untuneable and his eloquence full of fervour. And yet," reflects the writer, "I lived to see this very gentleman . . . by multiplied good successes and by real but usurped power (having had a better tailor and more converse among good company) . . . appear of a great and majestic deportment and comely presence. . . ."

Yet it nearly came to pass that at this juncture Cromwell

withdrew from English public life. So, at least, the story goes. Just before the King's return from Scotland, the Commons, ignoring his concessions in the previous session, had set to work to frame the Grand Remonstrance which enumerated all the sins of which Charles had been guilty since he came to the throne. It contained two hundred and four clauses, and one main constructive idea that henceforth the King should employ only such ministers as the House of Commons definitely approved. Such a claim was contrary to all extant theories of monarchy, and there were many who had been ardent in destroying autocracy who could not accept an innovation which transferred sovereignty from the Crown to the Parliament. Moreover it seemed to them that the whole spirit of the Remonstrance was unworthy; to arraign Charles for past blunders was in no way to heal the discord which was slowly ruining England's prosperity. But to Cromwell and Vane it was merely commonsense. They saw no reason to devote a day to debating each clause *seriatim*. Cromwell grumbled to Falkland about the delay. "It will take some debate," said the latter. "A very sorry one," replied Cromwell. Next day at nine in the morning, the debate began. All day, it continued, and "candles being called for when it grew dark" it went on until the small hours of the next morning. Then, the Remonstrance was passed, by a bare eleven votes. A subsequent motion as to its circulation roused heated discussion among the strained and exhausted remnant, so that "when they voted it," quoth Warwick, "I thought we had all sat in the valley of the shadow of death for we, like Joab's and Abner's young men, had catched each other's locks and sheathed our swords in each other's bowels had not the sagacity and great calmness of Mr. Hampden, by a short speech, prevented it." It was, so one commented, little better than the verdict of a starved jury, for the measure would not have passed had not many who disliked it betaken

themselves home in sheer weariness before it was put to the vote, while the fanatics who favoured it let no physical lassitude tear them from the struggle. It was always thus, Falkland complained, "they who hated bishops hated them worse than the devil, and they who loved them loved them not so well as they did their dinners." As he and Cromwell stepped out together into the darkness of three o'clock of a November morning, their limbs aching, their eyes smarting, their heads and hearts wearied by jaded thoughts and pent-up emotions, Falkland remarked to his companion that there had been a debate after all. Cromwell agreed he had been wrong, then burst out in vehement speech. "If the Remonstrance had been rejected, he would have sold all he had the next morning and never have seen England more and he knew there were many other honest men of the same resolution." But the votes of some eleven men ordered the course of history otherwise.

The Grand Remonstrance passed the Commons on November 22nd. Charles' triumphant entry into London took place on the 25th. Thereafter events moved rapidly.

The wealthier and more sober citizens might be anxious for concord and weary of Pym, but there were many others, separatists in religion or more hot-headed by nature, whose impatience with Westminster was caused by the lack of progress in ecclesiastical reform, not by any friendliness to Charles. On December 2nd, a certain Captain Slingsby wrote "The factious citizens begin to come again to the House with their swords by their sides, hundreds in companies, their pretence is only against episcopacy—Captain Ven, one of the burgesses for the City, is accused of procuring these tumults by saying in Mr. Bradborne's shop in Cheapside: 'You must go to the Parliament with your swords, for that party which is best for the Commonwealth is like to be over-voted.'" On that same day (December 2nd), Charles visited the House of Lords and received the

Remonstrance. He reproved the Parliament for setting a guard to protect itself, and ordered the guards' dismissal. He urged prompt action in Ireland and asked for aid. Already by declaring his determination to maintain the Protestant religion in its purity as established by Elizabeth and James, he had in effect refused to compromise with Puritanism. He returned after his speech to Hampton Court to be commended by Henrietta, for resisting the temptation to be conciliatory.

When, a week later, twenty leading London citizens arrived at the Palace and petitioned the King and Queen to spend Christmas at Whitehall, among their loyal subjects, it did indeed appear as if the new policy of firmness were already bearing fruit. Charles knighted his twenty visitors and he and the Queen returned to London. Here they came face to face with reality. If, recently, they had received expressions of loyalty which touched and encouraged them, it was because on both sides passions were rising and self-control was giving way. The tumults in the city, the angry mobs seething with fury against anything or anybody tainted with popery; the clashes between Roundhead apprentices and swash-buckling soldiers of fortune not only made Westminster anxious but made Charles feel that every shred of royal dignity had been torn from him. There were others, and the Queen was amongst them, who felt the pleasurable thrill which danger and excitement always bring to those not level-headed enough to foresee the consequences. These hot-heads talked plausibly of crushing the tumults by force, and engineered a foolish scheme whereby Sir William Balfour, the Lieutenant of the Tower, an honest and respected veteran, was to be replaced by a disreputable adventurer. Charles, dominated by the stronger characters about him and conscious that firmness had been more successful than conciliation, tried to put the scheme into effect but the outcry was so great that he withdrew his nominee and a certain Captain

Lunsford was appointed instead, a more respectable but not much more popular choice. The only effect of the incident was to stress the fact that instead of constitutional theories, the control of armed forces was the burning question of the moment.

On December 30th Slingsby wrote again: "I cannot say we have had a 'merry Christmas,' but the maddest one that ever I saw." "Lunsford being on Monday last in Westminster Hall with about a dozen other gentlemen he was affronted by some of the citizens, whereof the Hall was full; they then drew their swords chasing the citizens about the Hall and so made their way through those who were in Palace Yard and King Street till they came to Whitehall. The Archbishop of York was beaten by the prentices the same day as he was going into the Parliament. The next day they assaulted the Abbey, to pull down the organs and altar, but it was defended by the Archbishop of York and his servants with some other gentlemen who came to them, divers of the citizens were hurt but none killed. . . . They have avoided thrusting because they would not kill them."

"I never saw the Court so full of gentlemen, every one comes thither with his sword. . . . Both factions talk very big and it is a wonder there is no more blood yet spilt, seeing how earnest both sides are."

Ready to die for their religious faiths, yet hating the idea of shedding blood, both parties felt the imminence of civil war, dreaded to go forward, but dare not and could not draw back. The Bishops Bill was carried into the Upper House, and the bishops absented themselves, declaring that the mob made it too dangerous for them to attend. Policy rather than fear dictated their action, for their leader, Williams, the new Archbishop of York, declared that all actions of the Upper House were voided by their absence. Thereupon the twelve prelates were impeached, and found themselves imprisoned in the Tower. The Commons meanwhile

proceeded with their Militia Bill which provided for the levy of an armed force by commissioners appointed by Parliament. Both this bill and the Bishops Bill passed the House of Lords, and the New Year dawned for Charles with the prospect of an unpleasant decision ahead. Was he to consent to these bills, and thus surrender the remnants of his kingly authority—or was he to resist? If the latter—what then? The next week was one of the most crucial in Charles' life. He turned now, a month too late, to the new Royalists in the Commons. On January 1st Falkland accepted the seals of office as one of his Majesty's principal secretaries of state. Culpepper, one of his associates, became Chancellor of the Exchequer. Hyde took no office, but it had been understood in the transactions that led to these appointments, that he should be behind the other two, advising and directing and placing his sagacity, his legal training, and his ready pen at the King's service. Charles for his part undertook to do nothing without consulting this new triumvirate. He had returned to the policy of concession, and Henrietta might storm as she pleased, she was powerless before the arguments of hard facts.

Moreover, Charles had much more in common intellectually and spiritually with his new advisers than with Henrietta's foolhardy friends. He could not continue to concede impossibilities to Pym. No king could give up the control of his armed forces, or betray his Church. Compromise was impossible between two extremes of political and religious theory. But the moderate episcopalians represented, on the whole, the practical compromise most congenial to the English temperament. Had Charles honestly and wholeheartedly adopted their standpoint disaster might still have been averted. But emotional relationships were always apt to warp Charles' judgments. He was in love with his wife, and he did not fall in love with his new

advisers. Culpepper was a somewhat hasty man, whose temper had a churlish touch, whereas the Viscount Falkland, in spite of his few inches and high-pitched woman's voice, had an air of superiority, almost of disdain, that made the King uneasy. Hyde, however, was a good fellow, friendly and persuasive with just that pleasing touch of obsequiousness which was so rare in these upstart times. Thus Charles on January 1st. But scarce had he left his new friends when he heard some wild rumour that the Commons intended to impeach the Queen herself, and instantly his pledges were forgotten. His love for Henrietta swept away all counsels of expediency. He would be revenged for this new insult to his kingship; he would tolerate these knaves no longer; they, not the innocent folk they aspersed, should answer to the law for their actions. Had he not proof of treachery in their letters to the Scottish general. He had been too soft-hearted to let them be so long! Impeach his wife; it was intolerable! On January 3rd Charles ordered the arrest of Lord Kimbolton and five members of the Commons, Pym, Hampden, Holles, Strode and Haslerigg. The Attorney-General formally impeached them in the House of Lords and their books and papers were seized. The House of Commons, aghast at this breach of privilege, refused to surrender the accused and ordered the seals placed upon their studies to be broken. Digby was with the Queen when the news came to Whitehall. He was one whose active brain always teemed with new ideas, which he would not admit to be unpractical. If the Commons would not surrender the five members, the King should go and arrest them in person. Henrietta was delighted, it was a plan after her own heart; eagerly she besought the King to act upon it. Charles was uneasy! He felt that his new counsellors would not tolerate such an action. If he were defied, it would be fatal. But Henrietta insisted, and when all else failed, her hot

temper flared out. "Go, poltroon, pull these rogues by the ears or see my face no more." Charles winced. More than once lately she had threatened to leave him; to retire to a convent in France if he would not play the man! The fear that she meant it haunted him when he could not sleep at night. At least he would not be a coward. He turned away in silence and going to the guard-room spoke briefly to the guard, "My most loyal subjects and soldiers, follow me." Down the palace stairs he went, five hundred men behind him. The Palatine and young Prince Charles, ready for any lark, heard what was afoot and hurried to the King's side. They entered a private coach that happened to be standing in the road. The soldiers followed; a rabble poured behind, and so down the road towards the towers of Westminster the strange procession went. The Queen in her chamber watched the clock ticking the minutes away. An hour passed. She turned to Lucy of Carlisle who was in waiting. "Rejoice," she said, "for by this time I trust the King is master in his own state." Lucy bent lower over her embroidery frame and murmured a suitable reply. She was embarrassed. For more than an hour before, overhearing Digby's scheme, she had sent a hurried word to Pym to warn him of his danger.

Charles came to Westminster, and walked through the Hall with his son and nephew beside him. He bade his guard wait without and entered the Commons chamber alone. He cast a quick glance at the vacant place on the Speaker's right hand, where Pym usually sat. Then, with a "By your leave, Mr. Speaker, I must borrow your Chair awhile," he asked if the members were in the house. Speaker Lenthal was a timid man, but he had not guided that great assembly for a year or more without some of its high courage spreading into his own veins. He did not fail it now. Falling on his knee before the King he answered, "Sire, I have neither eyes to see nor

tongue to speak in this place but as the House is pleased to direct me." Charles knew himself beaten. He turned aside with a shrug. "Well, since I see all the birds are flown I do expect from you that you will send them unto me as soon as they return hither," and then, in a feeble effort at justification, he protested, "I assure you on the word of a King, I never did intend any force but shall proceed against them in a legal and fair way, for I never meant any other." So, ignominiously, he returned home. Had he succeeded, his action would have been condoned by contemporaries, no less than posterity. None could deny he had charges plausible enough to levy against the accused. But his failure, the very moderation of his words, the hesitancy which seemed to echo his own sense of the futility of his presence condemned him; *Qui s'excuse, s'accuse.* Coups d'état can only be justified by success, and Charles was not cast in the mould of a tyrant.

The accused members had slipped away by river to a refuge in the City, whence they were escorted in triumph a week later. It was a week of rising passions, and though Charles put a bold face on things at first, he had no money and his new counsellors were alienated by his foolhardy attempt. On the 5th he went into the City and tried to justify his action before the Lord Mayor, but the five members were not forthcoming. "Afterwards his Majesty was pleased to bid himself to dinner to Sheriff Garrett's where he stayed till three of the clock, and then returning to Whitehall, the rude multitude followed him, crying again 'Privileges of Parliament; Privileges of Parliament' whereat the good King was somewhat moved, and I believe was glad when he was at home." The King's patience, rather than his courage, gave out; he declared himself "driven away by shame more than fear to see the barbarous rudeness of those tumults." Fearing that some enormity might be at any moment perpetrated against the Queen, and cherishing a hope

that his absence might bring men to their senses, Charles left Whitehall on January 10th, accompanied by Henrietta and their elder children. They arrived at Hampton Court so unexpectedly upon the Monday evening "that the princes were obliged to the inconvenience of sleeping in the same bed with their Majesties." It was a drab exit. Charles did not return to his capital till January 1649.

There followed six months of inexorable drift towards war. A solution by force, which had seemed inconceivable a few months earlier, now appeared inevitable. To Charles it was a tragic realization which was brought home to him, when he summoned Essex and Holland to attend him at Hampton Court, as officers of the royal household, and they refused. They chose "rather to obey his writ whereby they were called to assist in Parliament about the highest affairs of England." It was said that Holland had dissuaded Essex from his instinctive obedience of Charles' command, urging that if they went they would both be murdered. Their refusal opened the King's eyes. As if to make one last desperate bid for peace he authorized his assent to the Bishops Bill. He would surrender the temporal power of the episcopacy if thereby he might save his people. But the time was passed when such concessions could mean anything. Both parties realized at last that it was a struggle in which far more than personal animosities and specific reforms were involved. It was a duel between "divine right" and "kingship by consent," between two different ways of worshipping God in an age when religious forms had spiritual significance and toleration was unknown. The months between February and August, 1642, were spent by King and Parliament, not in attempting to avert the struggle, but in propaganda, whereby their own ideas might be clarified and their supporters be enlightened. The long delay before fighting began was due to the extreme reluctance of either side to be the aggressor. Neither Charles nor

Pym would have it on his conscience that he had broken the peace of England.

In February the Queen left England, taking the Princess Mary to her husband in Holland, and carrying the Crown jewels, which she hoped to sell or pawn in order to obtain the money of which Charles stood in such great need. She was furious about the Bishops Bill, though Charles declared he had given way while she was still in England "to make it plain that the Queen did not prevent him from consenting to gratify his subjects." But Henrietta declared that she would stay a year in Holland and only return to England when the King had regained some of the "ornaments and original authority of Kingship." If not, she would go to France. Princess Elizabeth, a delicate child of six, wept because her mother and sister were leaving her. The toddler Prince Henry was unperturbed, but Mary was excited to be going to a new life and her eager youth cheered the sad parting. From Greenwich where she said good-bye to her family, the Queen went to Dover and there Charles bade her farewell. As he did so, Henrietta urged him to promise to grant nothing further to the Parliament till she should return. Charles was ready to promise her anything. He was suffering deeply. Only relief that she was at last free from peril made her departure bearable. Love for his own folk seemed for the moment to have blotted out any keen feeling about the insoluble tangle of public affairs. From Dover he hurried back to Greenwich, where Lord Hertford had been ordered to meet him with the two elder princes. He was terribly afraid that the Prince of Wales would not be there, that Parliament might retain his person with some idea of setting him up in place of his father. He forgot that the Puritan squires had little use for the son of a Catholic mother. The Prince of Wales was at Greenwich. "Now I have gotten Charles," sighed the King, "I care not what answer I send to them."

That which needed immediate answer was the Militia Bill, and it scarcely needed his promise to Henrietta, fresh in his mind, to convince Charles that here was a point on which he could not possibly give way. He refused his assent, and when Holland and Pembroke were sent to speak with him, "I shall not alter my answer in any point," was his reply. There was kingly indignation in his reproaches. "What would you have? Have I violated your laws? Have I denied to pass any bill for the ease and securities of my subjects? I do not ask you what you have done for me." The Queen wrote anxiously from the Continent, threatening never to look upon Charles' face again should he give way. She had no need to fear. At bottom there was a streak of Stuart obstinacy in him that would out. His own cousin, Richmond, had been insulted on his way from Parliament by the porters and the women of the town. He would not go back to Whitehall to submit himself to the indignities of a king mobbed by his own subjects. Instead, he went to York and there in due course Lyttleton and the Great Seal followed him, though not without much irritation and many cross-purposes which witness to a state of strained nerves in the King's entourage. Falkland and Culpepper went with Charles, and eventually Hyde also slipped away from London, as more than half of the Lords and many of the Commons were doing by degrees. The Parliament re-issued the Militia Bill in the form of an Ordinance, and thus enabled themselves to raise forces if required. In April the first open act of defiance took place. Charles attempted to occupy Hull, and was refused admittance by Sir John Hotham. As a poor second best he made a progress through the Midlands, raising men and money as best he could. In July, Northumberland, at Parliament's request, appointed the Puritan Earl of Warwick his deputy in command of the navy. By this act, Northumberland separated his fortunes definitely from those of the King, and remained

sadly in London, always the spokesman of peace, and respected even by extremists for his staunch probity and his dignified ways. Nevertheless, he had sealed the fate of his former friend and master, for when the navy accepted Warwick as their commander, the hope of help reaching him from abroad was denied to Charles. Throughout the summer the air was full of diverse negotiations and declarations, but the interchange of documents was rather a statement of views than a basis for agreement. The nineteen propositions which the Parliament submitted to the King at York would have given Parliament entire control of the executive, as well as of the education of the King's children. No king worthy of the name could accept them. Charles' own declaration was moderate and those who signed it bound themselves only to defend the King's person and lawful prerogative, the Protestant religion and privilege of Parliament. It came no doubt from Hyde's pen, who was now always by the King's side, frequently composing his despatches with a wit and elegance which made some shrewd but old-fashioned lord shake his head ruefully. " Our good pen will harm us," he said, for he declared the prospect of war was so terrible and would bear so hardly on the people's " general course of life " that it " would beget a frowardness in men to see such things treated of with elegance and irony."

The country as a whole was anxious and critical. The hard-headed Yorkshire folk resented the presence of the King's armed forces. " Oh that the swete parliament would come with the olive branch in its mouth," quoth one good dame. " Wee are soe maney frighted peopell ; for my part if I here but a dore creke I take it to be a drum. Things stand in soe ill a condition here as we can make noe money of our coalpits," she concluded. But when a hundred Yorkshire men presented their grievances to the King, he gave them " so good content " that they deemed him a " proper man,'

and wherever he went " his eminent virtues, his rational knowledge, his temperate course of life, his just mind and pious soul was so conspicuous that he found a loyalty when he had nothing of majesty or power to attract any persons to him." Only the bedrock of good hard grit was missing.

What must be, had to be, and so the gentry of England faced the hard fact of war and, neither elated nor panic-stricken, made the necessary arrangements. Sir Edmund Verney was not behindhand. " I am loth to ete in puter (pewter) yet but truly, i have put up most of my plate, and say it, tis solde." He ordered his steward to get powder and bullets ready, to take care rogues did not break into his house, and lodge somebody there to defend it, to have his waggon in readiness, and he concluded " gett in all such monneys as are owing you with all speede. Have a care of harvest and God send us well to receive the blessing of peace and returne thanks for it."

On July 11th, the two Houses at Westminster, the Lords a mere remnant of their former selves, declared that the King had begun war by granting commissions for the raising of cavalry, and assembling an armed force about him. They therefore resolved that an army of ten thousand men should be placed under the command of the Earl of Essex. On August 22nd, 1642, Charles raised his standard at Nottingham. The war had begun. He had no doubt of the righteousness of his cause : but he entered the struggle with no elation of spirit. The horror of civil strife deprived both sides alike of any of that hollow enthusiasm which surrounds the onset of war with a false glamour. Patriotism grieved, rather than gloried, at what had come to pass. To the end Charles' chief anxiety was to repudiate any but moderate claims and any responsibility for beginning the fight. The very device upon his standard, a hand pointing to the King's arms and the motto " Give Cæsar his due " witnessed his frame of mind.

The raising of the standard was an unhappy ceremony. An air of depression covered Nottingham town; there was none of the conflux of eager volunteers for which the King had hoped. Beneath a dull sky, in the teeth of a bitter wind, the proud panoply of arms seemed an empty mockery. The King with some two thousand troops assembled in an open field. Falkland, the secretary, moved behind the King, like a mourner who has lost one dearly loved. He mourned peace and his own tranquillity of mind. As the trumpets were about to sound, that the heralds might read the royal proclamation, Charles bade them stop, and calling for the paper made some hasty erasures. Hyde writhed inwardly. The heralds stumbled through the altered script.

The standard swelled out bravely from the grim tower of the castle. But the wind blew, and in the morning it lay a draggled heap upon the ground. They raised it again, not without difficulty, in a field nearby. Was it an omen? Who could tell? With a heavy heart, and an uneasy mind, the King went forth to war.

CHAPTER X

PRINCE RUPERT

> " That great God who is the searcher of my heart knows well with what a sad sense I go on, upon this service and with what a perfect hatred I detest this war without an enemy. . . . We are both upon the stage and must act such parts as are assigned us in this tragedy. Let us do it in a way of honour and without personal animosities."
> —*Waller to Hopton*, 1643.

IT was August in England. The harvest stood ready to be gathered in and homesteads lay in peaceful plenty, among the ripening orchards. Then, of a sudden came rumours of war, dismissed at first as idle pratings, slowly persisting as stark reality, made alive by a glimpse of horsemen riding north to join the King, of wagons laden with rusty arms, of round-headed men sober but unafraid, going out to " live and die with the good Earl of Essex."

Many there were who refused to believe; peasants or stubborn yeomen who went quietly on their immemorial way, only protesting in bewildered impotence when local armies swept down on their barns or cattle, and neither side respected the belongings of a " neuter." Others, militiamen who had never handled a pike, but whose grandfathers had mustered and drilled in awkward array when the Spanish Armada threatened the coasts of England, responded to the summons of the lieutenant of the county. According to the leanings of the great man of the district, they found themselves wearing the orange scarf of the Puritans or riding in the King's service.

But others volunteered of their own accord, and in

many cases an added grief fell to the lot that a mother had to bear when her sons went out to battle. For often they went different ways, torn by different loyalties, the one declaring for Charles, the other for Parliament. As throughout England the various local levies faced each other across the open fields, there were always many in both armies who had played together as children on those very commons over which they were now to fight, and had worshipped together in the same parish church.

For no clear-cut line of division, either of geography or of social status, separated the Royalists from the Puritans. Charles was strongest in the west and north; Parliament controlled London and the home counties, and was saved by the loyalty of the navy and the trading towns of England. Some counties endeavoured to abstain entirely. But it was never a war of one part of England against another, and since neither side had a national army, as contrasted with a collection of local forces, until the New Model was formed in 1645, it was impossible to execute any large strategical plan of campaign with soldiers whose outlook remained civilian, and who, though ready to defend their own homes, would only march unwillingly into "foreign parts" outside their own county.

There were, of course, exceptions. The trained bands of London, infused by the zeal and pugnacity of the cockney of all times, were drilled by Swedish officers in Artillery Gardens, and were the backbone of Essex' infantry. Charles, on the other hand, finding that the local militias were ignorant, ill-disciplined and often uninterested, frequently dismissed them to their homes, retaining their weapons for his volunteer forces. These forces raised by the enthusiasm of Cavalier noblemen provided him for a while with a sufficient army; Newcastle's "white-coats," raised in the wild border-country of the north, and the sturdy Lancashire Catholics who

followed the Earl of Derby, were among the staunchest troops that Charles ever had. His Privy Councillors supported him to the best of their ability, engaging "to maintain 1,695 horse for three months, in proportions ranging from the 100 promised by the Duke of Richmond to a score promised by Secretary Nicholas."[1] The King's own troop of guards, composed of young noblemen of the court, was, according to Clarendon, "so gallant a body that upon a very modest computation the estate and revenue of that single troop might justly be valued as at least equal to all theirs who then voted in both Houses under the name of Lords and Commons." All gave generously of their goods, as well as of their lives. Charles was saved from bankruptcy before the war began by the Catholic Marquis of Worcester, who gave him without stint the annual rent from his large estates. Others brought their plate—the commodity in which, before banking developed, men's riches were stored. But the years of war drained these sources of supply, and wore down men's enthusiasm. Thus Charles, having failed to seize success when it was in his grasp in 1643, was forced like his enemy to resort to impressment for his armies, and to plunder for supplies. He developed the fatal system of establishing numerous small garrisons, which lived as best they might upon the country around them. The method, disastrous from a military point of view, alienated the civil population, who were subjected to much oppression. One Royalist governor threatened, if supplies were not forthcoming from a certain parish, to "fire your houses, hang up your bodies, and scare your Ghosts." The Cavalier playwright, Lacy, satirized the Royalist officers "Flay-Flint" and "Ferret-Farm," plundering the countryside, while close by, at Thievesden House, the Roundhead captains, "Holdforth" and "Tub-text" obtained money more hypocritically by persuading the inhabitants to

[1]Firth's *Cromwell's Army*, p. 118.

entrust their valuables to their care; and marching off with them when forced to surrender.

Plunder undoubtedly was the chief sin of both armies in their early days, just as their chief virtue was a humane treatment of their foes, save when Protestant and Catholic met. But whereas the lack of discipline in the Royalist armies increased as supplies became scarce and effective leadership lacking, plunder and rapine grew steadily less in the ranks of the Parliament. The Puritan volunteers were ignorant rather than wilful, and if it were necessary to train them to obey their officers and feed their horses, at least they had themselves under control and so could submit the more readily to the training of the honest soldier at their head. It is doubtful if many of them had the "comely looks, the star-like eyes, grave forehead, lovely chin" portraying "the wisdom which abides within" that a Puritan rhymester attributed to them, and their opponents laughed at their cropped heads and narrow neckbands, but at least they had been "industrious and active in their former callings," and so "where natural courage wanted, zeal supplied its place." The Royalists were better soldiers at first, so far as training and experience went, and never lacked dash or courage, but many who had lived easy lives resented the discipline of arms, and among the ranks there was a readiness to loot and a general lack of morale which made a Royalist officer comment to an enemy, "Faith! in our army we have the sins of men, drinking and wenching, but in yours you have those of devils, spiritual pride and rebellion."

When war was declared, Charles had little money and few troops. But Essex failed to seize his opportunity and the King went into the borders of Wales, where volunteers thronged to his standard. Thereafter, for twelve months, he was within sight of victory.

That the balance of success in that first year was

definitely on his side was partly due to a certain uneasiness of conscience among many of the Puritans, who could not forget they were fighting against their rightful King. Their leaders would not have known what to do had they come face to face with Charles on the battlefield. Cromwell said he would pistol him as soon as any other man; but it was just in this that he differed from Essex and most of the other officers of 1642. The Royalists, on the other hand, could hold fast to the sheet-anchor of loyalty, whatever doubts they might have about the rights of the King's quarrel. "I have eaten his bread and served him near thirty years, and will not do so base a thing as to forsake him," said Sir Edmund Verney. Away in a Cornish village between the cliffs and sea, Bevill Grenville heard the call to arms. "I cannot contain myself within my doors, when the King of England's standard waves in the field," he cried. "I never loved my life or ease so much as to shun such an occasion, which, if I should, I were unworthy . . . to succeed those ancestors of mine who have so many of them in several ages sacrificed their lives for their country. . . ." So he went, young and eager, as scores of others went, to die at England's need in the service of his King.

There was a second reason why the King's arms prospered. While Essex was still endeavouring to instruct his amateur soldiers in the rudiments of war, Prince Rupert had organized and disciplined his uncle's troops. He had soon under his control a body of cavalry that struck panic into the ex-tailors and cobblers of the Roundhead foot. Charles owed much to his nephew in the first successful year.

Prince Rupert! Never was there a more gallant figure than this son of the Queen of Hearts, this Cavalier who lived to be sailor and scientist, this prince who was also a simple, honest man. Born amid danger, an exile in babyhood, a soldier while still a lad, he could only

remember one year of peace in his youth. It was the year that he had spent in England with his brother, at the age of sixteen. Then he learnt to love his quiet uncle, so different from his hot-headed self, but always considerate, wholly admirable as a sportsman, the model for a soldier in his temperance and self-control. Rupert went hunting with him in the new deer-park at Richmond on his last day in England. The loveliness of the park in June caught him unaware. He was close to tears as he spurred his horse to a gallop, careless if he stumbled for "he wished that he might break his neck so he might leave his bones in England." A healthy lad of sixteen is seldom conscious of deep emotion; when such moments occur they are not forgotten—Rupert remembered. Soon afterwards he was taken prisoner in the German wars, and from the castle on the Danube, where he dallied time away in impotent anger, he thought often of England, and railed at Fate that it was not his lot to serve her. Then the miracle happened. He was released, and at that very moment England needed him. It was a godsend to the Queen of Bohemia who had no idea what to do with her turbulent son.

She sent Rupert to England. War was not yet declared and Charles sent him back to Holland where he met Henrietta, and, impatient of the braggarts and coxcombs who surrounded her, scorned Jermyn and quarrelled with Digby, and sowed the seeds of future disagreements which boded ill for Charles when he needed the united help of all his friends. When the Queen understood her husband's intention of entrusting Rupert with high command she wrote, "He should have someone to advise him for believe me he is yet very young and self-willed. . . . He is a person capable of doing anything that he is ordered, but he is not to be trusted to take a single step of his own head." So Rupert was apt to find his plans modified or subordinated according to the advice of the King's civilian counsellors, and again

there was friction. In October the Elector Palatine, taken to task for Rupert's excessive impetuosity, wrote in indignation, " It is impossible for the Queen my Mother or myself to bridle my brother's youth and fieryness at so great a distance and in the employment he has." But if Charles lessened his nephew's powers for good and evil by listening to his critics, his own trust and affection were not diminished, and Rupert's Cavaliers, the epitome of dashing valour and chivalrous loyalty, won victory after victory in the King's cause.

With Rupert's coming the whole *tempo* of the royal army changed. Young, eager and affectionate, he rode across the fields to Nottingham to meet the King. He wore the short cloak, the fringed boots and the feathered hat of the Cavalier, a lovelock entwined in his curls, a scarlet sash tied across his breast. Unlike most, he was clean-shaven, and a dimple in the cheek belied the arrogant curve of nose and lips. Lovely in youth, he was to gain with age an added graciousness ; over hasty now in word and deed, he lost with the years his dash and vigour, only to reveal more fully his kindness of heart. He was no Puritan in speech or action, but of strict Protestant upbringing and moderate views. Above all, he was a man of honour whom his soldiers loved. Charles felt at his coming a renewal of the martial dreams of his own youth. His self-confidence, always greater in action than in the council-chamber, began to increase. Rupert, not Hyde, dominated his mind. The war had begun.

So into Shropshire, " where great bodies of the loyal and stout-hearted Welch " resorted to the King.

In the border-counties Charles organized his forces and raised supplies, while a month too late to be effective, Essex' volunteer army with a large contingent of the London trained bands marched across England to join battle. Many of the apprentices, released from their indentures to " join up," and their not less zealous elders

were more intent on burning altar-rails, tearing up surplices for handkerchiefs and spoiling the estates of malignants than on managing their weapons. " Accidentally one of Captain Frances' men forgetting he was charged with a bullet shot a maid through the head and she immediately died. From hence we marched very sadly two miles. . . ." Thus wrote Serjeant Nehemiah Wharton to his friends in London. The men were as little disciplined in their different way as the tapsters who disgraced the King's armies. They did not hesitate to criticize their superiors. " This day," wrote Nehemiah at the beginning of the march, " our soldiers generally manifested their dislike to our Lieutenant-Colonel who is a ' god-dam blade and doubtless hatch in hell ' and we all desire that either the Parliament would dispose him or God convert him or the Devil take him away quick." Parliament appeared more ready to comply than the supernatural powers, and the unpopular officer was cashiered. None the less, by the time Essex had brought his men to Coventry there were signs of open mutiny, and many timeservers were demanding their five shillings a day and pillaging their " fellow-traitors." The King's friends were delighted when they heard rumours of their enemies' difficulties. They heard, too, reports of gallant deeds done in single combat nearer the capital ; how Sir William Balfour's son had been killed by a champion of Colonel Lunsford's. How distant already seemed those winter days at Whitehall that the incident recalled ! Rupert chafed for battle and pushed on to Worcester, which the rebel army was approaching. The Mayor cried " Welcome " and asked him to dinner, but Rupert answered " God damn him. He would not stay but would go wash his hands in the blood of Roundheads."

There was no more than a skirmish. Essex' troops, who had spent a peaceable Sabbath day at Worcester " with Obadiah Sedgwick, who gave us two heavenly

sermons," went on to Hereford. There, some of them went to service in the Cathedral. "The Pipes played and the Puppets sang so sweetly that some of our soldiers could not forbear from dancing in the holy choir; whereat the Baalists were sore displeased." But Nehemiah's adventures for the moment were nearly over; Rupert had no intention of dallying in the west. He realized the need of decisive action. A blow at the enemy's vital spot might end the war before Parliament had tapped its resources or organized its armies—every month the war went on, the King's superiority over his enemy dwindled. The march, therefore, was set for London. But Essex wheeled about and was soon on the King's tracks. The time for a pitched battle had come, and Charles halted at Kineton in Warwickshire and established his troops on the slopes of Edgehill.

It was Sunday, October 23rd, a sunny day but cold. The north wind blew across the plain into the King's face as he stood in silence with some comrades, surveying the rebel army that lay stretched below him. At last someone broke the silence and asked Charles what he thought. "I never saw the rebels in a body before," he answered sadly. "I shall give them battle. God, and the prayers of good men to him, assist the justice of my cause." But down in the plain the Lord-General's regiment from his own county of Essex, Mr. Cromwell's horsemen from East Anglia, and sober Londoners under Holles, were all praying—to the same God—for the defeat of a wicked King. There was less praying in the Royalist camp, for the courtiers thought that men of low estate must necessarily be fellows of mean spirit, and expected an easy task on the morrow. The veterans who had seen service with Gustavus or in the Low Countries were less certain. On the morn of battle, Sir Jacob Astley, the old Royalist soldier, said his prayers. "Oh Lord!" he cried, "thou knowest how busy I must be this day; if I forget Thee do not Thou forget

me." Then he rose from his knees. "March on, boys," he ordered curtly.

When the troops were arrayed the King addressed them with his usual brevity. His words rang true. "Your King is both your cause, your quarrel and your Captain. The foe is in sight. The best encouragement I can give you is this that, come life or death, your King will bear you company, and ever keep this field, this place and this day's service in his grateful remembrance."

Battle was joined. Rupert swept all before him on the right flank, and dashed in pursuit of the enemy. The King's bodyguard followed, eager to share the spoils. But the dogged pluck of the Roundheads broke the Royalist centre; the King's standard was seized and Verney lay dead upon the field. Those about Charles urged him to flee but he refused. Then suddenly there was a stir on the plain. A soldier, wearing the orange scarf of the Essex Regiment, pressed through the throng around the captured royal standard, which was held on high by the Lord-General's secretary. The soldier seized the trophy; a "penman" had no business to carry it, he cried, and he dashed away to the safety of the hill. For he was no Puritan, and he laid the royal colours at Charles' feet, snatching off the hated scarf which had disguised him in his dash among the enemy. He was a certain Captain Smith, and Charles knighted him on the spot, his heart warmed by the deed of gallantry. The King was grievously disappointed at the uncertain close of the battle. Was Rupert right? Should they forbear from further attack? Or was Falkland right in thinking a last desperate charge might win the day? The Prince and secretary had changed rôles, it seemed, in their advice on this occasion. Similarly in the enemy's camp some were for withdrawal and some for renewed attack. "In this doubt of all sides, night, the common friend to wearied and dismayed armies, parted them."

The battle was over, but Charles would not sleep. He watched all night with Rupert, by the side of a camp-fire, thinking his tired thoughts, while a bitter wind blew over the battle-field, freezing the wounds of those who lay untended under hedge and ditch. Just before daybreak, he rested for awhile in his coach; then he rode out to view the field, and save what wretches' lives could still be saved.

All that day the two armies rested. Nothing was done. Each alike were bitterly disappointed. Each had hoped a single battle would end the struggle. The agony and horror of civil war was now known to them, and with it had come also the knowledge that this was only the beginning! Already, they were disillusioned.

Next day, Essex withdrew and the road to London lay open to Charles. It was a critical moment, and the King failed, as he had failed so often before as a statesman, because he did not make straight and hard for the goal before him. Rupert, knowing the urgency of the situation, offered to push ahead, seize Westminster and prepare Whitehall for the King's return. Charles thought of his last months at Whitehall, of the horror of riots, of the vituperations of the mob. Could he face it again? Would a forced entry into his capital give him any satisfaction? No! Could he not negotiate, and return as one who forgave, not one who crushed his people? "I was afraid of the temptation of an absolute conquest, and never prayed more for victory over others than over myself." As a man, his hesitation was excusable: as a soldier, it was suicidal. When at length he approached London, Essex had arrived before him. As he drew near Charles offered to treat, and Parliament agreed. If Prince Rupert and his men once entered the city, the King himself would not be able to hold them back; riot and rapine, sack and pillage might add a ghastly chapter to London's history. Even the iron-hearted Pym was not ashamed

to fear while the gentle Northumberland took arms in the town's defence.

As if to underline their fears, while Parliament debated whether to negotiate, Rupert, angry at his uncle's hesitance, rode ahead of the main army. It was a misty November morning, and the band of Cavaliers rode down in silence upon the town of Brentford, shrouded in the river-mist which mingled with the wood-smoke from the cottage fires. For the townsfolk were sitting down to their dinners, secure in the knowledge that Lord Holles and his troopers were on guard without. Suddenly the alarm was sounded. Out of the mist Rupert and his men had swooped upon the Parliamentary force and driven it from the town. Soon only the bodies of the slain and the despairing cries of the wretches who had been hurled into the river remained to tell of the stand Holles' men had attempted to make. The townsmen cowered in their homes, while the Cavaliers swept through Brentford, obtaining provender for the main army and sacking the homes of friend and enemy alike. Midnight had passed before at last the town lay still in the exhaustion of despair. But eastward in the City, there was no rest that night. London was in danger, and every hour was precious. Out into Middlesex marched Essex' men, and with them came the volunteers, apprentice lads and sober city-men, "down-and-outs" and Puritan noblemen, ready to defend their homes and united in the satisfying simplicity of obedience to their officers' command. Down the great west road they marched through the dawn. Next morning when the King reached Brentford an impromptu army of twenty-four thousand men was lined up to oppose him some two miles away at Turnham Green. Many an honest heart trembled and many a knee felt weak, as the citizens tried to hold their arms aright, and bear themselves as soldiers. Many urged Essex to attack, but he knew too well what a motley crowd he

captained. It were wiser to wait. Through the Sabbath morning, the citizen-army stood on the defence, while at home in the City, those left behind went to hear sermons and kept their minds from wandering as best they could. The Lord Mayor and other worthy citizens debated how the army at Turnham Green could be fed, and moved the ministers "in their morning sermons in their pulpits to encourage and incite the people to spare some part of their diet, ready dressed for that present dinner and to bestow it upon the soldiers aforesaid. Whereupon after the sermon was done, carts being ordered to stand ready in the streets in every parish throughout the city to carry presently away what was sent, there were sent at least an hundred loads of all manner of good provision of victuals, bottles of wine and barrels of beer instantly carried to them, and accompanied by honest and religious gentlemen who went to see it faithfully distributed to them." But when the cavalcade reached Turnham Green the crisis was already over. The King had ordered the retreat. The needs of the soldiers were satisfied and the wagons followed Essex' men as they rode in triumph into Brentford to solace and feed the frightened townsfolk. London had experienced its great thrill, and freed from immediate danger, settled down to a gloomy year of indeterminate battles, heavy taxation, and restricted trade.

As for Charles, he had withdrawn to Reading with a heavy heart! A year before he had entered London in triumph; now the citizens faced him in angry defiance. He could not, he dare not, attack those solid ranks of his own subjects! Rupert might fume at a lost opportunity; yet retreat he must and continue negotiations. But the incident at Brentford had ruined any chance of treaty; it had brought home to Parliament once more Charles' unreliability. He might try to explain away his nephew's zeal, the fact remained that the main army had followed up Rupert's advance-guard. It looked as

if the offer to treat had been nothing but a blind to cover the attack! The Commissioners continued their work half-heartedly. Charles himself realized that nothing could come of the parleyings. Nothing had happened to render less insoluble the problems which had brought the war about. The horror of war had been revealed, that was all. Charles returned to Oxford, and there set up his court. Rupert employed the winter months in planning a decisive campaign for 1643.

It was a good strategical plan if the young commander had possessed the ability to carry it out as well as conceive it. But not only was his influence in the King's Councils limited, so that he was constantly hampered by criticism and counter-instructions, but local circumstances were too much for him. He planned a joint attack on London by three Royalist armies; Newcastle was to sweep down from Yorkshire; a force of loyal Welch was to advance from the west, while Sir Ralph Hopton at the head of an army of Cornish and Devon men crossed England to join the attack. From Oxford Rupert and his cavalry would co-operate as necessary. The first stages of the campaign were successful. Yorkshire was subdued and the Fairfaxes were cooped up in Hull. In the west of England only the trading town of Gloucester, and the seaport of Plymouth remained firm for Parliament. The time had come for the advance on London. But the Yorkshiremen and the Cornishmen alike became less enthusiastic and less efficient every day as the distance increased between them and their own county. Moreover Newcastle himself preferred to lord it in the north than to subordinate himself to the impetuous Rupert in the south. A skirmish with the army of the Eastern Association showed him that there was sterner stuff and better organising ability in the Puritan ranks than he had suspected. He argued that it was unsafe to leave Hull untaken in his rear while he forced his way south. He settled down to besiege the

Fairfaxes, who, supplied with provisions by sea, energetically resisted. In Wiltshire, Hopton's forces gradually dispersed and after a succession of small victories he himself was wounded. Charles reluctantly and against his better judgment gave up the idea of the attack on London and rode out with Rupert to besiege Gloucester. The balance of success was still on the Royalist side, but a second chance of victory had been lost. It would not occur again. Neither side seemed capable of winning a decisive battle; neither side would surrender the principles for which they fought, and so for another two years the war dragged wearily on.

Much had happened in 1643 to make all men long for peace. Good men had died, of both parties. Hopton's victorious campaign had been saddened by the deaths of Bevill Grenville and Sidney Godolphin. Godolphin, a slim and delicate youth, one of Falkland's friends had earned a name in peace-time for fastidiousness. He hated rain, and would turn his horse's bridle homewards if the wind was in his face. But, when the call came, he bore the fatigue of winter marching without flinching or complaint, and was slain at last in the door of a Devon inn upon the edge of Dartmoor.

In June Hampden was mortally wounded at Chalgrove Field. Charles, who could respect virtue even in his enemies, offered his own surgeon to the wounded man, but he was past human aid and died six days later. To the last, he had no thoughts of self. "Oh Lord, save my country—Oh Lord, be merciful to——" With the words half-spoken, he died, the noblest of all Puritans, whose own secret dream had been to tutor the King's son, believing that by education one could best mould the future of the country. His great fight for ship money, a few mild though subtle speeches in the Commons, a noble death in battle, and his portrait, which bespeaks integrity in every feature: we know little more of him. Is it enough to explain the high place

he held in the world's esteem? Personality is greater than action, and sometimes it persists through the centuries. Hampden was a good man whom people loved, and his name is fragrant still.

The fighting went on, and men became accustomed to the nearness of death. The first flush of sacrifice and loyalty had faded. Life began to flow again in more ordinary channels. Charles himself was spending a dual life; at times on the field of battle, at times at Oxford, where he inhabited Christ Church and a Whitehall in little mimicked the old-time pleasures and pastimes of peace. "Love and gallantry sported themselves along the pleasant river banks . . . wit, learning and religion joined hand-in-hand as in some grotesque and brilliant masque." All Souls was a store for arms and munitions of war, and students at the threat of an assault would doff their gowns and don their leathern jerkins digging trenches with the zeal of youth. Lectures were few and far between and the dons, stirred from their usual placidity, surrendered the college plate to be melted down in the Mint set up at New College. The town was more critical of the court than the university, but the citizens grumbled and submitted and profiteered when they could. Food was less scarce than in London, but when a shortage arose young enthusiasts from court or college would ride out at daybreak to supply the need with gun or fishing tackle. The ladies enjoyed themselves, spurring on their admirers to deeds of gallantry in the continuous skirmishes which took place along the Thames valley, or pretending by intrigue or flattery to mould the counsels of the King. The citizens' wives derived an equal thrill and satisfaction in aping the fashions and quizzing the manners and morals of the ladies of the war-time court. Charles himself, when he was not endeavouring to control a quarrelsome council-table at Oriel, spent much of his time at Oxford in the congenial company of the academicians. With

his chaplain, Jeremy Taylor, with Sheldon and others, to whom war was but an unfortunate interruption of more important concerns, he revelled in long days among the books of Bodley's new library. Or he walked in the gardens of Christ Church in gentle converse with his secretary, Falkland. Between the two men a close sympathy grew up, and the one would speak of his home at Great Tew, and of the joy of hard thinking and good conversation; while the other replied with talk of his pictures, and the architecture of the colleges around him. There is a story told by a contemporary that once they questioned the fates together by a trial of the "sortes Virgilianæ." Charles opened the Æneid and read with concern the passage:

> "Yet let a race untamed and haughty foes
> His peaceful entrance with dire arms oppose;
> Oppressed with numbers in th' unequal field,
> His men discouraged, and himself expell'd,
> Let him for succour sue from place to place,
> Torn from his subjects, and his son's embrace.
> First, let him see his friends in battle slain,
> And their untimely fate lament in vain;
> And when at length the cruel war shall cease,
> On hard conditions may he buy his peace;
> Nor let him then enjoy supreme command,
> But fall untimely by some hostile hand,
> And lie unburied on the barren sand."

When Falkland tried his fate, the lines were as apposite, beginning:

> "Oh Pallas! thou hast failed thy plighted word,
> To fight with caution, not to tempt the sword!"

The two men, uneasy and over-sensitive, left the library full of silent foreboding.

The story—it seems too apt for truth—illustrates well Falkland's own gloomy meditations. But Charles, more quickly influenced by the atmosphere about him, was on

[1]See Marriott's *Life of Falkland*, p. 283.

the whole, cheerful and confident. Like the rest of his small Oxford world, he believed that the rebels' resistance was nearly at an end. During the spring of 1643 commissioners came to Oxford from Westminster to treat for peace. Their leader was Northumberland. He was accompanied by Holland of the doubting heart, who, less consistent in his principles, stayed behind at Oxford when Northumberland returned. It was the latter, however, whom Charles was most glad to see. He came like a feudal nobleman, with a train of provisions behind him, and, taking up his quarters in the city, renewed the joy of old associations. His daughter, Isabel, the young wife of Sir James Thynne, was a special favourite of the King's, and in spite of himself, Charles' heart melted towards his old friend, as he and his councillors visited Northumberland freely, dined at his magnificent table, and talked happy words of peace, across which the twin subjects of the bishops and the militia cut like a blast of icy wind which no door of goodwill could successfully shut out. After a month or two of pleasant intercourse, the arrival of the Queen in England and Northumberland's own realization that the King could not in honour betray his Church or his friends, closed another abortive attempt to end the struggle, before the brutality of war and the death of the best men of both parties embittered and discouraged those who were left.

Henrietta had not been idle during her year abroad. Without her aid in men and money, the King's victories would have been impossible. Scattered in the archives of Paris and London [1] are her letters to Charles, full of that vigour and clarity of thought which one would expect from the Henrietta who had grown to maturity in the last few troubled years. "I hope in three or four days to send you six pieces of cannon, with one hundred

[1]Collected and deciphered by Mrs. M. A. Everett-Green in *Letters of Queen Henrietta Maria.*

barrels of powder, and two hundred pairs of pistols and carabines ; the rest soon after. I shall also send, for the present, ten thousand pieces." These are the phrases which are interspersed with shrewd admonitions as to policy and a mother's anxiety about her son. " Above all do not leave Charles, and have him near you. Do not let him go out of your sight, for assuredly at this time everything is to be feared." She suffered much in her loneliness and anxiety, aggravated by frequent pains in her eyes which had always been delicate. It was no easy task to raise money. Henrietta, who believed in getting things done at whatever cost, had laid her queenly dignity aside and began by pawning the royal jewels. There were wearisome transactions further afield before the larger pieces could be disposed of, but the Dutch merchants proved ready purchasers of the smaller items, adorning their own stout persons with the jewels that a King had loved and decking their buxom wives with trinkets that had glinted in the ballroom at Whitehall. But Henrietta had pluck, and wrote in as light a tone as she could muster: " I have given up your pearl buttons, and my little chain has done you good. You cannot imagine how handsome the buttons were when they were out of the gold, and strung into a chain. . . . I could not get for them more than half of what they are worth. My great chain, and that cross which I had bought from the queen my Mother is only pledged . . . I will send to-morrow to Antwerp to pawn your ruby collar. . . . Every day hopes are given me that those of Amsterdam will give me money."

In one respect at least, she was more fortunate than her husband. She had no doubts about the necessity of the war. The rebels must be crushed and the justice of the royal cause would lead on to triumph. But her chief anxiety lay in the character of Charles himself, which none understood better than she. The delays and proclamations, the proffered concessions of the six

months between her departure and the raising of the Standard had filled her with anger and impatience. Unable to grasp the point of view of Charles or the constitutionalist Hyde, she regarded all such hesitation as signs of weakness and dishonour. The attempted treaties at Reading and Oxford affected her in the same way. Her letters are full of entreaties and even threats. Knowing that whenever any man spake boldly to the King, he tended to give way, she dreaded any counsel of concession. " My whole hope lies only in your firmness and constancy, and when I hear anything to the contrary I am mad." So she wrote on one occasion, and on others, " Delays have always ruined you. Take a good resolution and pursue it . . . for to begin and then to stop is your ruin—experience shows it you. It is not enough to declare yourself in writing; actions must afterwards be seen." Later she upbraided him in forthright terms : " It is true that if you always allow yourself to go on as you have done, notwithstanding all the promises you have made me, I must bear it. . . . You are following the path you did in Scotland. Adieu royalty. There is no more of it at all for me. I am resolved to bear all and to live in some place where I shall fancy myself a country-girl, and leave you to follow the counsel of those who are wiser than I, as they think." Such a threat could always extract from Charles any promise she wished.

But she was still fond of him in spite of her upbraidings, and the ugly rumours that Jermyn was her lover ring hollow in the light of the joy with which she greeted any chance of a return to England, her frettings at continual delays, and the dangers and hardships she was ready to bear that she might be once more by the side of the King. Charles himself had missed her intolerably, and he was agitated by rumours from London of things going amiss with her. At length, in February 1643, she set out for England, only to be driven back by a storm

on to the Dutch coast. Nine terrible days at sea had all but broken the Queen's indomitable courage, but she pulled herself together as she soothed her terrified ladies and assured them between bouts of sea-sickness that Queens of England were never drowned. Her second attempt was more successful, though even then ill-luck dogged her path, for after landing at Bridlington she was attacked before daybreak by four ships of the Parliament, and was forced with her ladies to rise in haste and take refuge inland under a hedge till the falling tide forced the enemy ships to retire.

From February to July the Queen remained in the north, associating herself with Newcastle and his army, and proudly dubbing herself "generalissima—extremely diligent with one hundred and fifty waggons of baggage to govern in case of battle." So working her way slowly south-westward, she was met at last by Rupert at Stratford-on-Avon. In these unsettled times, even a Queen could not choose the company she kept, and that night she stayed with the grandchild of an actor, a man who had written plays for bread and butter—his name, Shakespeare; his plays somewhat out of fashion. The King, however, often read them; perhaps she remembered that and told her hostess so, in queenly graciousness.

At last, on July 13th, she met Charles at Kineton in the valley below Edgehill. A versifier indulged in transports, which began:

> "Prodigall Fates! What all your grace
> And all your blessings on one place!
> See how Edgehill is grown unruly
> Since the thirteenth day of July."

Charles himself felt it a fitting meeting-place—this hill of solemn memories. There was sunshine now instead of north wind, and the King's joy was whole. The Queen, happily sure of herself, refused him a private

meeting until he had granted her requests. He acceded to them gladly before hearing what they were : a peerage for Jermyn and favours and promotions for other of her friends. He saw no hint of future trouble in these imperious demands. He had expressed his attitude in a letter written on her first arrival in England. "I think it not the least of my misfortunes that for my sake thou hast run so much hazard, in which thou hast expressed so much love to me, that I confess it is impossible to repay, by anything I can do, much less by words, but my heart being full of affection for thee, admiration of thee, and impatient passion of gratitude to thee, I could not but say something leaving the rest to be read by thee out of thine own noble heart."

The Queen's coming had disastrous results. Not only did it put an end to any chance of peace at a time when his superiority in the field enabled Charles to negotiate with honour. The evil she did her husband's cause was more insidious and more deadly. Almost as soon as she had settled herself at Merton, the intrigues and illwill of the King's side and Queen's side in the old days at Whitehall re-appeared at Oxford. There were many rivalries, some of long standing, between the Protestants and Catholics in the King's service, between the soldiers and civilians at the council board. Ashburnham, the well-beloved but unstable bedchamber man, had made mischief even between Hyde and Culpepper. Charles complained at times that the feuds of his friends wore down his spirit as much as the assaults of his enemies. But the Queen's presence brought a personal element, a feminine intensity into the rivalries ; and the granting of places became the excuse for much undignified wrangling. Holland, for example, who had returned to Charles' side in the summer, and fought well in some engagements, vanished into the enemy's camp again because he failed to obtain the post he coveted. Richmond, the proud and sensitive Scot, imagined a slight

where none was intended, and his relations with Charles were strained by Rupert's infatuation for his lovely young wife, the auburn-haired Moll Villiers. Above all, Digby, the mischief-maker, "gay, gifted, and good for nothing,"[1] was to the fore again, the man who "advised the King worse and acted for him more zealously than any of his counsellors," whom Charles could not resist because of that very grace and reckless fertility of mind which made him so dangerous a confidant for the impressionable King. Digby and Rupert quarrelled interminably, for the latter, a soldier to the core, was uncommunicative in council and seemed "with a pish to neglect all another said," the surest way of aggravating the effervescent Digby. There were frequent reconciliations, more or less hollow, but Charles found Oxford a far less pleasant place than it had been a year previously, and a settled melancholy seemed to envelop him so that he did not attempt to interpose in the mutual recriminations—and the courtiers wrangled on, dreading the Queen's frown more than the King's silent displeasure.

In such circumstances, the camp was a more peaceful place than the court, and in August the King and Rupert, giving up reluctantly the plan of a united attack upon London marched against Gloucester and prepared to subdue the town. It was an easy task compared to the capture of Bristol which Rupert had carried out brilliantly earlier in the year. To the surprise of friends and enemies alike Gloucester resisted. The townsfolk's sturdy defence is one of the many stories of true valour that dignify the war. When news of their resistance reached London it stirred admiration and pity in the hearts of the citizens. Many felt a desire to emulate such deeds. When Essex asked the trained bands to volunteer for the relief of Gloucester, there was a great response, and once again the citizen-soldiers marched across England.

[1]The phrase is used by Warburton whose *Memoirs of Prince Rupert* is a guide for all this period.

They had no regular supplies and suffered much hardship. "At Chesham we were well accommodated for beer, having great plenty; at Aynhoe we were very much scanted of victuals; at Chipping Norton our regiment stood in the open field all night having neither bread nor water to refresh ourselves, having also marched the day before without any sustenance." After more than a week's marching they saw Gloucester before them, from the high land above Cheltenham; and saw, too, signs of activity in the King's camp. Their coming had achieved its purpose; the siege was being raised.

When Essex first approached, the King had been playing picquet in a cottage by the fire. He did not seem to realize the significance of the event. But Rupert was angry and dismayed. As usual, however he was cautious in his strategical advice; Essex should be left to make the attack. Charles, characteristically, having been roused by his nephew's emotions, acted rashly; he interposed his army between Essex and London and forced a battle. As so often before, at Newbury, neither side could claim a complete victory, but Rupert's cavalry were worsted for the first time in the war, and the road to London lay open for Essex and the trained bands. Steady discipline and the will to soldier well had worked marvels and the citizens marched back to London proudly, and took their discharge with their heads held high. But at Oxford there was gloom, for at Newbury many a gallant Cavalier had perished. Carnarvon and Sunderland, two of the best of the King's noblemen, had been killed, and Falkland welcoming death as a release from the horrors of war, had sought and found it in the heat of battle. His fevered spirit was at rest.

During the winter of 1643 there was much hard thinking on both sides. Charles and his counsellors realized that they were no longer the rebels' superior in the matter of supplies or the calibre of their troops.

The Parliamentary volunteers were improving steadily in skill and discipline, while the morale of the Royalists was decaying steadily owing to the necessity of allowing them to forage for their food. The navy, which had provisioned Hull and Plymouth, and prevented their surrender, made possible also a certain amount of foreign trade which saved London and East Anglia from feeling the full privations of war. Something decisive must be done quickly if the victories of 1643 were not to be barren of result. In December, Charles summoned a Parliament at Oxford offering a free pardon to any erstwhile member of the Parliament at Westminster who might attend. But the deliberations effected nothing, and this "Antick-Parliament" as the Puritans called it was dubbed by Charles himself a mongrel-Parliament when he found it as cantankerous as any of its predecessors. The issue must be decided in the field, and Henrietta and Digby were full of schemes for obtaining help from France or Holland. The Queen's French blood, and her daughter's alliance with the House of Orange made such negotiations natural and justifiable both to the King, and Henrietta. What they failed to grasp was that no European power was going to incommode itself to save Charles Stuart, and that whatever arguments reason might provide for such entanglements, rumours of their existence would do immense harm to the royal cause. The majority of Englishmen felt that the war had gone on long enough and many were ready to give the King another chance. If they knew that he had planned to bring in foreigners to fight in England, it was these very peace-loving folk who would be roused to indignant fury.

Pym however, did with impunity what the King tried and failed to do. He must have allies. He found them in the Scots, and the fact that his action raised no moral indignation indicates the growing sense of unity between the two countries which fifty years later made possible

the Act of Union. The conclusion of the Solemn League and Covenant was Pym's last work. It was a difficult winter. No longer was he King Pym who could do no wrong. He had heard an angry mob shouting for his life in Palace Yard, as years before they had called for Strafford's. For the Londoners, a fickle people, were weary of war. After a mock trial, Laud was dragged out to the scaffold. Everywhere, there were "horrible fears and confusions." The King's victories were magnified, and it was rumoured that Essex' army had dwindled to four thousand men. Rupert, an arch fiend, overshadowed the imaginations of the populace. Men, fearful for their wives and children, forgot political principles. But Pym's wife and child had died twenty years before. He was worn out with over-work, but he had no use for a "defeatist" attitude. He turned to Scotland. By the terms of the Solemn League and Covenant, a Scottish army was to march into England, receiving from Parliament fixed rates of pay, and in return Parliament promised to accept no peace which did not permit the reformation of the English Church according to "the example of the best reformed Churches." Before the Scottish army had crossed the border, Pym was dead, in the service of a country that has denied him the love it has given to Hampden. This at least one can say of him, that he never faltered in the path of duty.

But the hour had come for younger men than Pym. The issue no longer lay at Westminster, and the immediate problem was military not political. In Lincolnshire, Oliver Cromwell was working steadily at the task he had set himself after Edgehill. Second-in-command to Manchester, he was welding together an army that would be more than a collection of individuals, each unwilling to stir far from home. The cavalry of the seven eastern counties was now under his control, ready to march north, south, and west at his command. At

Winceby fight in October he had nearly lost his life. Twice his horse had been shot from under him, but he had sprung to the charge again and led his men to victory. Newcastle's advance had been checked, and Lincolnshire reconquered. In the summer of 1644 the army of the Eastern Counties was sent north to co-operate with the Scots in Yorkshire. Cromwell's chance had come.

He was not the man to miss his opportunity. To him, life was a great adventure in the service of God. He was one of the elect, and this belief in his own salvation was no mere formal acquiescence in a creed, but a tingling sense of well-being, that glowed in his mind and body, and enriched him in power and faith. It had not been always so. He had been a typical English youth, fonder of his games than of his books. He was a countryman to the core, sociable and in the main easy-going, though when aroused he could be as obstinate as all East Anglian folk. He had married and settled down, and been happy above the average in his wife and children. He was not particularly ambitious. Only, at the age of thirty-nine, two years before the Short Parliament put a term to his quiet country existence did he experience a religious conversion. The force and fervour and strict self-discipline of the Calvinist faith gripped his imagination. He had hitherto been a moderate adherent, and remembering his past lukewarmness, he was at first plunged in gloom, through which he groped to salvation. He, "the chief of sinners," had now seen the light. It was a change of heart not theology, and it left him humble and grateful, with none of the false pride which characterised less genuine fanatics. Henceforth he must devote his gifts, the ordinary gifts of a practical energetic Englishman, to the glory of God and the establishment of His Kingdom. The Lord would lead him to the circumstances, in which he could serve His will, and would show His approval

by prospering His servant's efforts. Cromwell, unchanged in character though changed in spirit, remained the practical opportunist, distrusting theory, unskilled in philosophy, moderate in opinion and kindly in temper, but in place of the ineffectiveness of many moderate men, a burning zeal for righteousness supplied the driving-force of a personality, strengthened in addition by a powerful will and absolute honesty of purpose.

It was with this combination of determined effort, reliance upon God's guidance and practical commonsense that Cromwell faced his problem in 1644. He did not belittle his opponents. Rupert's Cavaliers were men of honour, and unless Parliament could enlist the help of "men of spirit . . . likely to go on as far as gentlemen will go," it would continue to be defeated. In his own "lovely company" of "honest, sober Christians," Cromwell had found the right sort of men; he asked himself what had imbued them with a capacity for sacrifice and an active courage, equal to that of the Cavaliers. Surely, their religion! His men's beliefs, therefore, whatever they might be, must be respected. True, there were many, Anabaptists and the like, who might offend the Presbyterians at Westminster, and the political views of others were as independent as their religious faiths. It mattered not, so long as they thought honestly and fought well. Liberty of conscience was no less important than other forms of freedom, and liberty must be the unifying ideal to inspire the men who fought against the King, as loyalty had inspired those who died for him.

In 1644, Cromwell marched north under the Earl of Manchester, and joined Leslie and Fairfax in the siege of York. The Marquis of Newcastle, surrounded by the three armies, held out in the hope of relief from Rupert, who was marching across England. Rupert, who had given up his idea of an attack on London, had not evolved any other satisfactory plan. The pernicious

garrison system was undermining his strategy. He was relieving brilliantly but futilely one stronghold after another. From Lancashire, where he had rescued the heroic Countess of Derby at Lathom House, he crossed the Pennines and raised the siege of York. The three besieging armies marched west to intercept Rupert and Newcastle, and on Marston Moor on July 2nd, the greatest battle of the war was fought. At first, the Royalists had the advantage. Fairfax's men and half the Scots were driven off the field, but, on the other flank, Rupert's cavalry found themselves outmatched by Cromwell's men. "They stood at the sword's point a pretty while, hacking one another," but at last Cromwell broke through the Royalist horse "scattering them like a little dust." Rupert retreated, fighting every inch, and Cromwell restraining his troops, wheeled to the aid of the hard-pressed Scots. The rout was soon complete and as he fled with his remnant to the dales, Rupert, in frank admiration, dubbed his victorious opponent "Ironsides."

The defeat at Marston Moor meant the surrender of York and the loss of the north. The banners taken at the battle were displayed in triumph at Westminster. They were a cheering sight and were of some small service in the arduous task of obtaining recruits and extorting money. But Cromwell was dissatisfied. The Scots, having won the battle, quarrelled among themselves and were uncertain what to do next. In the south of England, Essex and Waller co-operated unwillingly so that all energy and initiative were paralyzed by their mutual jealousies. In June a joint attack upon Oxford was planned, but Charles marched out of the town, offered battle at Copredy Bridge and scattered Waller's army while Essex wandered aimlessly into Cornwall. Now was the time for the King to march boldly into Kent, where many Royalists waited a chance to strike a blow for the royal cause; London was undefended, with Fairfax and

Manchester away in the north. But Charles was suffering from just the same depression as his opponents. His commanders, like theirs, stultified each other by senseless disputes. Everyone longed for peace, and Charles, with remarkable persistency, continued to send messengers offering to treat, but he would not recognize the assembly at Westminster as a true Parliament and thus a deadlock was reached which prevented negotiations. Principles were unchanged, though hearts were heavy. It was the nadir of the war.

So the King turned west on Essex' track. His thoughts were on Exeter not on London. There Henrietta had taken refuge, when Oxford was threatened in the spring. The Queen was pregnant, and in ill-health; her last confinements had been difficult, and her spirit had given way. Charles had bidden her farewell in April at Abingdon. They were never to meet again.

The child was born in June at Exeter. She was called Henrietta, and at Charles' special request "if the health of my little baby will permit," she was christened in the Cathedral. Henrietta was in a pitiable state both in mind and body. Her "cruel pains" had given place to something worse, a creeping paralysis which she described in a sad letter to the King. "It seems to me that my bowels and stomach weighed more than a hundred pounds and as though I was so tightly squeezed in the region of the heart that I was suffocating . . . my legs and knees are colder than ice . . . I cannot see with one eye. . . ."

She, who had been so brave, was now in mortal terror of being captured. She longed for France. Her physicians bade her delay and Charles urged her to keep her courage. A flash of her old spirit returned, but only that she might escape, leaving her babe behind her. She crossed safely to France. She had come home and gradually her ills of soul and body left her. But Charles, who said nothing, was now alone.

The news of Marston Moor, and Henrietta's heart-rending letters from Exeter reached Charles about the same time. When he himself came to Exeter, after the Queen had left, his mental distress was such that his health gave way. Two other pieces of news combined to sadden him. Newcastle, blaming Rupert's rashness for the disaster in Yorkshire, had taken ship to Europe and given up the royal cause. There were also rumours that the Prince Palatine was coming to London at the invitation of Parliament; it was easy to imagine for what purpose. The visit did take place and was a complete fiasco, for the average Londoner had a sense of fair play, and contrasted the Elector's ingratitude to his uncle with the loyalty of his brothers. Those who had planned the visit drew back, and the Elector returned crestfallen. Charles wrote to him a mild and gentle letter asking "for his mother's sake" at whose invitation he had come. He said no more but he was intensely hurt, remembering his kindness to the youth in years gone by. He must, however, shake himself free from his personal sorrows. He followed Essex into Cornwall.

The Parliamentary general was in difficulties. The Cornish folk refused him supplies, and in attempting to obtain them by sea he was hemmed in between Lostwithiel and the coast by Charles' army. Essex collapsed; with a few companions he escaped by a fishing-yacht from Fowey, leaving his men to look after themselves. Most of the cavalry got away, slipping through the blockade as best they could. The infantry surrendered; Charles, who had conducted the whole campaign with his usual mildness, dismissed the men to their homes. Their arms and ammunitions he seized for the numerous volunteers that had flocked to his standard. Then, with renewed courage, he returned towards Oxford.

It was a great victory, seizing the popular imagination of the time more than Marston Moor had done. It again seemed possible that Charles might triumph. It

was true that his Cornish army melted away as he went eastward, and near Newbury he was met by a united force of Parliamentarians under Waller and Manchester, on their way, too late, to assist Essex. The battle was indecisive, but Charles was able to advance to Oxford, where he set about organizing a winter campaign, and arranging for Richmond himself to approach Westminster with terms. He even agreed to recognize Parliament. It seemed as if, elated by his own personal success in Cornwall, he was mastering the situation and was about to achieve peace by a successful combination of energy in the field, and moderation in his parleying. But the second battle of Newbury had more far-reaching results than appeared. Cromwell had been disgusted by Manchester's reluctance to attack. "If we beat the King ninety-nine times, yet he is King still, and so will his posterity be after him, but if the King beats us, we shall all be hanged and our posterity be made slaves." This was Manchester's point of view and it convinced Cromwell that new men and new methods were essential. A national army, akin to that of the Eastern Counties, must be put into the field. Cromwell returned to Westminster, and spent the winter in a sharp struggle in Parliament.

It was characteristic of him, that though he began with bitter charges against Manchester, he moderated these and directed the debate away from personalities to a consideration of the general problem, when he saw that he could enforce his will on the assembly. At his instigation the New Model army, alike in form to that of the Eastern Counties, was levied and organized.

The Self-Denying Ordinance, which was passed at the same time as the necessary military proposals, disposed of the old aristocratic officers like Essex and Manchester without disgracing them, by ordering all Members of Parliament to resign their commands. It did not prohibit their reappointment in due course. After a

decent interval Cromwell was made second-in-command to Fairfax, who was a respectable figurehead, a reliable soldier and an honest man. The men of the New Model were out to win the war in a downright soldier-like way. They had no doubts; they believed in God in their own manner; they hated godless Cavaliers and they trusted Cromwell. When the war was over, one could think of politics. The first thing to do was to end the war by a decisive victory in a pitched battle.

There were some months' delay, for the change had been foisted unwillingly on the Presbyterian party, who considered the religious and political views of the new army to be abominable. They listened the more readily to the King's peace proposals at Uxbridge, the most sincere effort towards agreement that either party yet had made. Now, while their fortunes were equal, Charles urged a "retiring from fighting like beasts, to arguing like men whose strength should be more in their understandings than in their limbs." He was ready to make numerous concessions, but he would not establish Presbyterianism, sacrifice his friends, or give up the control of the militia, and as Parliament insisted on these points, the treaty failed as completely as its predecessors, in spite of the King's prayers and his confidence that he had done nothing to cause the rupture.

In the spring of 1645 Charles sent his eldest son to the west, with Hyde and Richmond in attendance. Thence in due course they escaped to Scilly and thus via Jersey to France. Hyde expostulated; he was loth to go. But for once Charles was adamant. His wisest counsellor and his dearest friend should go with his son. It was a noble resolve, and it may be that thereby Charles saved the monarchy. For had it not been for Hyde the Restoration might have been attempted by force and embittered by reprisals. But for the King himself the sacrifice was great. He had sent away the two men he could least spare. There remained only Ashburnham

and Digby, whose presence had driven Rupert, once Charles' stay and delight, into sulky gloom.

The end was near at last. Fairfax and Cromwell were determined on battle. They were some 14,000 strong, while the King's sole remaining field army numbered about 8,000. Charles was endeavouring to make a junction with Montrose, whose victories in Scotland had gladdened his heart that spring, so that he could write in good spirit to Henrietta, foretelling the joys of the reunion he so passionately desired. Fairfax came up with the Royalist army, in May, at Naseby in Northamptonshire. Rupert remembered the Ironsides at Marston, and urged caution, but Charles was anxious to try his fate. Many of the Cavaliers were scornful of the New Model whose men were base-born, and they saw its approach without fear. Even Cromwell contrasted the King's gallant array with his own "poor ignorant men," but he did so in quiet confidence, for as he went calmly on his business on the eve of battle he "could not but smile out to God in praises, in assurance of victory, because God would by things that are not, bring to nought things that are." So it proved. Rupert, zealous as ever when once battle had been joined, swept away Ireton's troops and wounded their leader, but he had hoped to find himself face to face with Cromwell. A last-minute change of position had placed Cromwell on the other flank, where his success equalled Rupert's, and, keeping his men under control, he swung round to attack the hard-pressed Royalist centre from the rear. The King's regiments were forced to retreat; complete defeat was imminent. But Charles urged on his troops. "One charge more," he cried, "and the day is ours." All his youthful dreams of martial glory, all the high hopes with which Rupert had inspired him before Edgehill, all his dreams of a future, of reconciliation with his subjects, strengthened him at that moment for one last great effort!

Rupert was galloping back to the field with his victorious Cavaliers. Had he arrived a moment sooner his voice of command would have been added to the King's exhortations. But, before Rupert, came a courtier—was it Ashburnham, Wilmot, or some other, destined to mould history but to leave no name behind him? The courtier snatched the King's bridle and turned his horse from the field. Something snapped inside Charles. He could do no more. No man can fight destiny. The lot had fallen against him. Like a little child, he suffered himself to be led away.

The Royalist troops resisted no longer. All was over. Rupert came up too late. The standards of King, Queen and Prince alike were taken. Far more important was the capture of the King's own private cabinet of correspondence. There was still work for the Roundhead army to do; fortresses to be taken; districts to be subdued. For another weary winter Charles stayed on at Oxford, while Rupert and Digby, Goring and Wilmot quarrelled over past rivalries and future plans. Remnants of Royalist armies wandered aimlessly from the shelter of one friendly garrison to another, till old Sir Jacob Astley fought the last skirmish at Stow o' the Wold, and bade his conquerors go and play or quarrel among themselves. But to all intents and purposes, the war was over. There remained the greater problem of the peace.

CHAPTER XI

CROMWELL

"I confess that speaking either as a mere soldier or statesman, I must say there is no probability but of my ruin; but as a Christian I must tell you that God will not suffer rebels to prosper or his cause to be overthrown, and whatsoever personal punishment it shall please them to inflict upon me must not make me repine much less give over this quarrel . . . whatsoever it cost me, for I know my obligations to be both in conscience and honour neither to abandon God's cause, injure my successors nor forsake my friends."—*Charles to Rupert, after Naseby, August 3rd*, 1645.

THE KING had lost. But there were three victors, not one. The Scots, besieging Newark which still held out for Charles, were not content to draw their pay from Westminster; they believed that they should have a say in the settlement of the country they had saved. In the Parliament the larger number of the members of both Houses, agreed that the time had come to fulfil the promises of the Solemn League and Covenant and establish the Presbyterian faith in England. But they considered the Scots rapacious and mistrusted them. They began to debate peace proposals and to consider the disbanding of the Army which had fulfilled its task. But the Army had never considered itself a mere collection of military units. Its regiments were schools of political theory; its officers talked theology more readily than tactics, and its men were ready to march in disciplined array to establish a new social order. They scorned Parliament, who had talked while they fought, and whose Presbyterian Church would exclude Independents as rigorously as Anglicans. They had no intention of disbanding!

There were three victors, the Parliament, the Army and the Scots, all in a suspicious and irritated frame of mind. There was also a mass of ordinary folk, thankful that fighting was over, and in their thankfulness pitying the King, and hoping he would have fair play. And there was Charles, unusually clear about the points at issue, but as incapable as ever of judging men. There were three main problems: the religious settlement, at once the most important and the most insoluble, the political question which centred round the control of the armed forces of the state, and the personal problem of the pardon of the King's friends.

Nearly three years were to pass between the end of the first Civil War and the King's execution. The first years witnessed the disputes of the Army and Parliament, while Charles himself passed into the custody of each of his victors in turn, negotiated with each and hoped through their disagreements, to recover power and safety. He gave way on none of the three vital points, but his constancy, noble in itself, was vitiated by his readiness to play off his enemies against each other, until all confidence in him was lost. A final understanding between Charles and the Scots led in 1648 to the second Civil War. The Army dominated the situation and the King, in stricter captivity at Carisbrooke, realized by degrees the fate that awaited him, and attained at last serenity of mind.

They are not easy years to understand, for there was no clarity of thought or action on any side. Old loyalties clashed, new faiths arose; personal interest and political principle were intertwined. Even Cromwell, who in the war had seen his goal and gone straight for it, was often inconsistent and confused. Charles failed to adjudge rightly the forces to which he was opposed, and could not grasp the futility of intrigue, but he has been given less credit than he deserves for remaining firm through all vicissitudes, to his

three loyalties, to his Church, his crown and his friends.

There were many who tempted him. In the spring of 1646 when he still lingered at Oxford, the councillors about him urged him to give way and Henrietta wrote long letters storming and cajoling in turn. At first the letters dealt mainly with an incident which has brought much discredit on the King, the plan to bring over an army of Irish Catholics, and Charles' promise to the Pope to tolerate their religion. The scheme was as mad as most of Henrietta's, but Charles was in extremity and there was nothing inconsistent in his offer of toleration which he considered inconvenient and not "without some hazard" but justifiable "for the eschewing of some worse thing or to obtain some great good." Such a time he thought had now arrived.

Nothing came of the plans, and the time had not arrived for toleration. But only on these lines could the eventual religious settlement be made. For military reasons, as much as moral, Cromwell had advocated toleration in his army of Independents; for military reasons, Charles also considered it. The idea, once in men's minds, would not out; though fifty years were to pass before Locke evolved it into a philosophy and the English people accepted it as the only practical solution of their religious difficulties.

For the moment, however, the choice lay between two forms of state Church, the Anglican and the Presbyterian. The remnant who were still with Charles could not appreciate his intense love of his Church. "If importunity could prevail I should not long brag of it for there is none doth assist me heartily in my steady resolutions but Sir Edward Nicholas and Ashburnham. All the rest are very inclinable to most flexible counsels. . . ." It was now that Charles missed the steady guidance of Hyde, at once a passionate churchman and a moderate statesman. As it was, the one who urged concession

was Rupert, reconciled to the King after a stormy quarrel in the autumn—and Rupert after all was half a German and could not understand the vital difference between the two English forms of Protestantism. Nor could Henrietta. "If I should quit my conscience how unworthy I make myself of thy love," Charles pleaded with her, "amongst all the difficulties against which I have struggled in this unparalleled rebellion none hath been more prejudice nor of half that vexation to me, as the causeless stumblings and mistaking of my friends; yet whilst I was rightly understood by thee, I despised them all." But the Queen's impatience with Charles' conscience only waxed the greater, and scoldings and threats never to return took the place of entreaties. "Whatsoever chiding my wilfulness (as the Queen may think) may deserve, for God's sake leave off threatening me with thy desire to meddle no more with business." Thus the King implored her, promising to content her in everything, save matters "of such a Nature as if the Queen should be desired to renounce all spiritual obedience to the Pope." Even this plea failed; the sense of mutual understanding which had bound the two together in good days and ill days alike had failed them now. In ultimate need, spiritual values alone count, and in spiritual things their paths divided. When a proferred concession of Charles on another matter angered the Queen, she reproached him: "I would venture to say, if you had followed our advice, your affairs would be in a different state from what they are." How easily he could have retaliated that in the beginning her counsels had ruined him. But he was as patient as she was hot-headed, and never reproached her for past indiscretions or present lack of sympathy. But he felt himself, as never before, alone.

Fairfax's army was encircling Oxford. It was necessary to act. The King wished to make a bold appearance in London, there to treat in person. He would be able

to make the most of the dissensions between his victors, and there was still a certain power and dignity encircling the person of the King, which would evoke respect and support from the ordinary citizen. Parliament realizing this, refused him a safe-conduct, and the rumours that some already talked in the city of executing the King or sentencing him to perpetual imprisonment made the risk too great to run. Charles' thoughts turned to the Scots, who were not far away besieging Newark, a loyal garrison which still held out. Away in Scotland, Montrose was still winning victories for the Royalist cause, and with that admixture of sentiment which often clouded his judgment, Charles played with the idea of making peace with the Covenanters, mediating between them and Montrose, and putting himself at the head of a new National party in Scotland. As in 1641, when first his difficulties overwhelmed him, so now in his defeat, he turned instinctively to his own countrymen. They would not betray him. He forgot that man's religious faith is stronger and deeper even than patriotism.

One Monday morning, in the hour before the dawn, Charles disguised himself as Ashburnham's serving-man, and the two stole out of Oxford, with a chaplain, Dr. Hudson, also in disguise. Rupert longed to go with his uncle, but his great height would have made their detection inevitable. Sorrowfully he said farewell to the King, whom he was not to see again. A month later Oxford surrendered; the young Duke of York joined his brother and sister under Northumberland's care, and Rupert eventually joined in exile the little band who in gallant penury waited the turning of the tide.

For a week after the King's disappearance from Oxford no one knew his whereabouts. The air was full of anxious rumours. Then, on May 5th, to the amazement and dismay of the Scots army he appeared in their midst before Newark. He was not a welcome guest. Leslie took the first obvious step of obtaining the

King's order for Newark to surrender, and on May 13th, the Scots marched north, with Charles. At Newcastle, they paused to think. Ashburnham, accompanying them, at the King's request sailed for France, and Charles was alone. He soon discovered that his first task of making terms with his captors was no easy one. Long talks about the respective merits of Episcopacy and Presbyterianism convinced neither him nor his opponents; the Scots could not help him unless he would take the Covenant, and this he could not do. In July, commissioners arrived from Parliament with propositions which he refused categorically, for they insisted on the abolition of episcopacy, took the militia out of his control and exempted his friends from pardon. Nevertheless he "was graciously pleased to give the commissioners his hand to kiss, and to dismiss them with friendly aspect." In September bad news came from Scotland. Montrose had been defeated and captured at the battle of Philiphaugh. Charles' pleadings saved him from death but he was exiled. The last Royalist hope had gone. In December, depressed and wavering, Charles suggested that he might establish Presbyterianism, if possible with a measure of toleration, for three years only. It was made clear to him that this would be inadequate. He withdrew the suggestion, and refused to go any farther. So, not ignobly, he sealed his own fate.

He was wretchedly unhappy. The Scots in a dilemma how to dispose of him, anxious to return to Scotland but afraid to take Charles with them as a rallying point for the Royalist remnant, made his existence as unpleasant as possible. "I never knew what it was to be barbarously baited before, never wanting new vexations." Later he complained of "pressures against his conscience" as well as "barbarous usages." For once his patience failed as he listened to the long extempore prayers of the Presbyterian divine who was always present at meals: while the minister "was forming his

chaps as his manner was, his Majesty said grace for himself and was fallen to his meat and had eaten up some part of his dinner before his chaplain had ended blessing the creature, the King then checking him and saying that he intended not to stay until his meat was cold, whilst he stood whistling for the spirit." But he himself felt this to be unworthy of true Majesty; months passed by and he never lost control again. Instead he discussed theology with the learned Alexander Henderson, and so impressed his adversary by his sound arguments and good manners that Henderson, remembering these days at Newcastle, wrote of him afterwards: "Never man saw him passionately angry, nor extraordinarily moved either with prosperity or adversity . . . never man heard him curse . . . never man heard him complain or bemoan his condition in the greatest durance of war and confinement . . . and (which is beyond all admiration) being stript of all counsel and help of man and used so harshly as would have stupified any other man, then did his undaunted courage and transcendent wisdom show itself more clearly and vindicate him from the obloquy of former times to the astonishment of his greatest enemies."

By January 1647, the Scots, who were not bound to Charles by any promise of protection, decided to wash their hands of the whole affair. In that month they received their arrears of pay from the English Parliament and marched home to Scotland, handing over the King to the commissioners appointed by Westminster. It seemed to most observers that the Scots had sold their King for £200,000, and many an honest soldier and thoughtful dominie felt uneasy about the transaction as they left England behind them. They loved Parliament the less and Charles the more in consequence.

But though some of the Scots had tears in their eyes as they said farewell to the King, he was curt with them, in marked contrast to the graciousness with which he received the parliamentary commissioners, the aged Earl

of Pembroke, Lord Montague of Boughton, and others.

" My lords, you are welcome. I pity the long journey you have taken to come hither and receive your coming cheerfully." As he greeted them, he was delighted to find that some were known to him from earlier days. They had been noblemen at his court, and he responded with alacrity to their instructions to name a place where he would resort. He chose Holmby House, the stately palace in Northamptonshire that had been his as Duke of York, and now belonged to his son. He only insisted that the commissioners should rest four days before they entered on further travel. He was in high spirits, for these courteous gentlemen were pleasant company after the Scots soldiery, and it seemed impossible that once in personal negotiation with Westminster some basis of agreement should not be reached.

The journey south gave him further ground for hope. People flocked from all parts to see him. At first he shrank from their curious gaze. Then to his delight he realized that those eyes were full, not of scorn, but of pity, and that the shouts were " acclamations of joy " and " prayers for his preservation." They fell down before him " bringing their sick to be touched by him, and courting him as only able to restore to them their peace and settlement." Even the troopers who guarded him bore no malice nor " gave those country-people any check or disturbance as the King passed . . . (a civility His Majesty was well pleased with)." So, he came to Holmby where " very many country gentlemen, gentlewomen and others of ordinary rank, stood ready there, to welcome the King, with joyful countenances and prayers."

It was his last taste of triumph. Such manifestations of deep-rooted loyalty were no part of the programme of Parliament. Alone at Holmby, Charles had to face facts again. The most hopeful fact from his point of view was the growing friction between Parliament and the

Army who were threatening London. Thinking Westminster might be more conciliatory in its new difficulties, Charles sent a further reply to the Newcastle propositions, offering to establish Presbyterianism for three years, and to relinquish the control of the militia for ten. He requested the right to name twenty divines to assist in the final settlement of the Church. It marked the farthest limit of his concessions, only justified by the fundamental fact that by one means or another the King's Government must be carried on.

Charles was well treated at Holmby as far as material things went. " All the Tables were as well-furnished as they used to be when his Majesty was in a peaceful and flourishing state." " The King every Sunday sequestred himself to his private Devotion, and all other days in the week spent two or three hours in Reading and other pious exercises ; at other times, for Recreation, would, after Meals play a Game of Chess." There was no hunting in the neighbourhood, and no tennis court at the house, and the lack of physical exercise was a real hardship to the King. But he walked daily in the famous garden of herbs, soothing his spirit with its scent and outpacing with his habitual quick stride the old Earl of Pembroke, his dissolute but kindly guardian. He kept in remarkably good health throughout his stay. Three days a week he went to play bowls at a neighbouring estate, and once as he walked over a narrow bridge, a peasant, fishing beside the stream, slipped a paper into his hand. It was a letter smuggled through from Henrietta, and the fisherman was a disguised officer. That was a splendid day for Charles ; he held his head high, looking so much the King that even when Pembroke saw the letter he did not take it from him. But the commissioner was more careful in future and the next letters never reached the King. No material comfort could hide the hard fact that he was a prisoner. There were mutual jealousies between his private

attendants and those appointed by Parliament to wait on him. At length the commissioners approached Charles and requested him to dismiss "such of his servants as were there and had waited upon him at Oxford." He had no choice but to comply, and after some "expostulation and deliberation" he agreed, acquainting the attendants after dinner next day. They kissed his hand, prayed for his freedom and in great grief left him. "All that afternoon the King withdrew into his Bed-Chamber having given Orders that none should interrupt him in his Privacy."[1]

Another thing that troubled Charles was Parliament's refusal to allow his chaplains to be with him. He asked for any two out of twenty he would name, but they were denied him. It was even said that Westminster had ordered the communion plate from the chapel at Whitehall to be melted down to make a dinner-service for use at Holmby. It did not augur well for the religious settlement. Charles said his prayers himself as best he might, and could not explain to the friendly ministers who attended on Pembroke the reason why the absence of an ordained priest of the Church mattered vitally to him. He treated the Presbyterian clergymen with courtesy, "seeming to have a good esteem of them . . . both as to their learning and conversation." But he "always said Grace himself standing under the State, his voice sometimes audible." To the end he remained on good terms with the commissioners, and when Pembroke was seriously ill for three weeks with fever, the King sent each day to enquire "and in Person was graciously pleased to visit him twice, which kindness helped (as the Doctor said) much to his Recovery."

Before Parliament had replied to Charles' overtures

[1]It was now that Thomas Herbert became a groom of the King's bedchamber. He was with Charles to the last and his *Memoirs* tell us most that we know of the King's personal story during these two years.

a rude end was put to this friendly but futile stay at Holmby. One day in June a rumour came that a troop of some five hundred horse were making a "rendezvous" in the neighbourhood. At midnight a certain Cornet Joyce arrived with a party of men and demanded admittance. His business was to speak with the King. "From whom?" asked the colonel in charge of the guard. "From myself," replied Joyce. He refused to move, and when the colonel bade his guard stand to arms he found they had already fraternized with the horsemen who accompanied Joyce, and "finding they were fellow-soldiers of one and the same army," refused to stand in their way. Joyce entered and went up to the royal apartments. Outside the room where Charles was sleeping, the King's servants met him. Joyce demanded to see the King; the others refused to disturb their royal master. An altercation arose, stilled by the familiar tinkling of a bell, that silver bell which Charles always placed beside his bed before he slept. The King had awakened, and enquired the cause of the tumult. Being informed of the Cornet's rudeness, he refused to see him till daylight "which being told the cornet, he huff'd, but seeing his design could not be effected in the night, he retired;" so for a few hours there was silence.

In the morning Charles rose rather earlier than usual and sent for Joyce, who acquainted him with his intention to remove him. When the King asked him by what authority he acted, Joyce indicated the troopers behind him. Charles did not wince. "It is written in characters fair and legible enough," he answered lightly. "A company of as handsome proper gentlemen as I have seen for a long while." He had no alternative but to go with Joyce as required, but he insisted on the commissioners going with him, and extorted an assurance that he would not be forced to act against his conscience. He had but one consolation as his state became more

perilous. "You are masters of my body, my soul is above your reach."

With much apprehension as to what lay in store for him, Charles entered his coach and bade three of the commissioners ride with him. His servants, watching him with affectionate anxiety, saw that he endeavoured to hide his perturbation. Cornet Joyce and his troops rode before him, and behind, and so the cavalcade vanished down the dusty highway.

Thus, the little troop came to the army headquarters, near Newmarket, where Fairfax, apprised for the first time of what had happened, would have liked to send Charles back to Holmby. But stronger men than Fairfax controlled the situation. Since the conclusion of the war Cromwell had been uncertain in his attitude, and had genuinely endeavoured to reconcile the conflicting views of Army and Parliament. He was convinced that if Westminster made a dishonest peace, it was the duty of the Army to prevent it, but at the same time he checked and disapproved of the agitators and other wild spirits who were undermining the discipline of his men. A conservative at heart, he hoped for a peace which would make as few drastic changes as possible, but the intolerance of the gentlemen at Westminster, and their lack of imagination, wore out his patience. The Independents of the Army had won the war for them yet they now refused the Army toleration. "In things of the mind, we look for no compulsion, but that of light and reason," he declared. On this stand, he broke with the Parliament, and on June 3rd, 1647, he rode out of London and joined the Army. That he expected the breach to be irreconcilable may be gathered from the fact that three days before leaving, at a private meeting at his lodgings, he authorized Joyce to ride down to Holmby and secure the person of the King.

Now, for the first time, Charles came into close contact with Cromwell. At first they respected and

did not dislike each other. They had both proved themselves good soldiers, and Charles appreciated the courtesy with which Cromwell and Fairfax both treated him. On the whole, he was well content with the change in his fortunes. As the days passed and he heard the news of the world, his spirits, always liable to sudden fluctuations, rose jubilantly. The quarrel between Army and Parliament was becoming more virulent every week. Eleven leading Presbyterians had been charged with treason by the Army, and forced to flee the country. "When thieves fall out, honest men come by their own." Charles was wildly optimistic. As the Army advanced towards London and then northwards into Bedfordshire, he accompanied it, staying at one or other of the royal residences, or at the houses of friends, and the freedom of movement allowed him and the courtesy with which he was treated raised his hopes still higher. His old servants, and above all, his best friend, Richmond were allowed to return to him, and once again he was permitted his own chaplains. This leniency brought home to him the important fact that the Independents were less hostile to episcopacy than the Presbyterians, since they "could subsist under any form, which the other could not do." An old friend, Sir John Berkeley, had been sent over with Legge and Ashburnham, by the Queen to help Charles in any way they could and Berkeley was soon in close negotiation with Cromwell and his brilliant but reserved son-in-law, Henry Ireton, both of whom were anxious for a practical settlement, based on liberty of conscience in religious affairs. It was in this month of July that Ireton drew up the Heads of Proposals which embodied the Army's terms. Neither the Covenant nor the Prayer-Book were to be enforced; the control of the armed forces and of great civil appointments were to be in the hands of Parliament for ten years, and no Parliament was to sit for more than two. The King's friends were to be treated with leniency. It was a

statesmanlike document, and there was nothing in it that the King could not in honour accept. But its moderation emanated from strength not weakness. When Berkeley discussed the draft with Ireton and suggested first one then another alteration in Charles' favour, he was cut short by the Puritan's succinct reply, "that there must be a distinction made between the conquerors and those that had been beaten, and that he, himself, should be afraid of a Parliament where the King's party had the major vote." It was Ireton too who spoke plainly to Charles, when the King's optimism became apparent. "Sir, you have an intention to be arbitrator between the Parliament and us and we mean to be so between you and the Parliament." Herein lay the rub.

Charles recognized his opponents' strength of character, but instead of realizing that it was therefore madness to play with them, and that in a frank acceptance of the terms they offered lay his only chance of safety, he distrusted their intentions, and was frightened by their ruthlessness. They were not "gentlemen" and though theoretically it might be possible to accept their terms more easily than those of Parliament, he could not feel of them, as he could of Pembroke and Northumberland and most others at Westminster, that they were men of his own social and cultural position, whom he could trust as individuals and need not fear. He could not forget that Cromwell and Ireton were "upstarts," and when the Heads of the Proposals were submitted to him privately at Woburn, he frankly disliked them. In so far as his hesitance was due to fear, it was not without grounds. Cromwell himself was uneasy. Opportunist as he was, he thought Ireton was too slow, and Berkeley tied himself up too much "by narrow principles." There was already plenty of untrammelled talk among the "Agitators," who represented each regiment in the Army councils. Many were open

Republicans, and some were Levellers, believing in social as well as political equality, and Cromwell put it mildly in affirming that he doubted the Army would not persist in their good intentions to the King. When Ashburnham turned up and declared in his breezy way that "having always used the best company he could not converse with such senseless fellows as the Agitators," it became clear to Charles what an impossible alliance it would be between courtiers and New Model men, between hereditary King and soldier turned politician. And in so far as his dislike of the proposals was based on a doubt of whether any such agreement would work, or whether he was right in treating with a body of men who flouted Parliament's authority and relied only on force, his attitude was perfectly justifiable. But where he made his grave mistake was in imagining that he was indispensable, and that, if he gained enough time, both his warring victors would turn to him with easier terms. "A crown so near lost was never recovered so easily as this would be . . ." quoth Berkeley urging the proposals, but Charles replied that they could not "subsist without him, and that therefore he did not doubt to find them shortly willing to condescend further." His conscience was particularly uneasy about the exemption from pardon of five of his friends. "Well, they will be glad e'er long to accept of more equal terms!"

Before the Heads of the Proposals were submitted to him formally, however, the Army had mastered the situation. A crisis had arisen owing to the intense Presbyterianism of the London citizens. There had been riots and angry demands for the return of the eleven members. The mob resented the Army's possession of the King's person. The disturbances culminated in the Speaker and some of the members riding out to the Army and placing themselves under military protection. The Army then marched on London, and Fairfax, by occupying Gravesend, cut off the city's food supplies

and reduced it to complete submission. He had done what the King's forces had failed to do in four hard years of war. The Army marched through the sullen streets and occupied the Tower. Perfect discipline was maintained, and there was no disturbance. Fairfax established his military headquarters at Putney, and Charles, on August 14th, came to Hampton Court.

He remained there till November. They were halcyon days, so at least they remained in the memory of the little band who accompanied him in his captivity. Now, for the first time for years, Charles was able to hunt again. Never had he revelled more in the joy of the chase than during those September days in Richmond Park. There were long games of tennis, also; and above all, across the river at Sion House there were the children.

He had seen them first again in July, when the Army was at Reading. Fairfax had granted his request for a sight of them, and Northumberland had brought them down from London. They met at Maidenhead. All the villagers trooped out to see what they could. They scattered roses on the path, for sentiment had ousted politics for the nonce. The women whispered to themselves as the royal children appeared. One can imagine their eager comments. York was a proper young gentleman—no wonder his look was sombre; he was full young for the sights that he had seen. The Lady Elizabeth was a saint, they said: bless her sweet little face! Faith she looked as if a breath would blow her away; 'twas honest country air she needed, not to be cooped up in London town, though it be in a palace. As for the young Duke of Gloucester, a fine lad for seven he was. And look! he had some spirit. He was taking joy in the adventure. He was but a babe.

Northumberland took the children to the "Greyhound" and there the King came about eleven. It was pathetic to see his joy and the children's love of him.

Cromwell was among the officers on guard and he admitted afterwards that tears were in his eyes. Northumberland was greatly moved, and much of Charles' bitterness against his former friend vanished when he saw his kindly treatment of the children.

They all had dinner together at one big table, and then proceeded down river to Caversham, where they spent two perfect days.

The delights of that reunion were repeated often while Charles was at Hampton Court. He was always a welcome visitor at Sion House, and only when he touched once on politics did he find Northumberland as stubbornly conscientious as of old. As the autumn days drew in, the earl's household and the royal children moved back to St. James'. Since it was difficult for Elizabeth, who was still delicate, to visit her father and return on the same day, she was allowed at least once to stay with him at Hampton Court. It was not quite as happy a visit as it should have been. The child noticed that the King was ill at ease; the high hopes of summer had given place to a depression that consorted well with the dull November days. The princess could not sleep at night, worrying over problems which no child should have had to face. The tramping of the soldiers outside her bedroom door frightened her, and made her think of prisons. When Charles saw she was not sleeping he asked Colonel Whalley, who was in charge, if he would remove the guard. Whalley was willing to do so if Charles would renew his parole. This the King did not do. But the guards were removed. If Colonel Whalley gathered that Charles was contemplating escape he said nothing about it.

For by November the situation had changed again. Two months before he had been formally presented with Ireton's Heads of the Proposals. He had rejected them to the annoyance of the officers who were present and the amazement of Berkeley, who whispered to the

King that he spoke as if he had "some secret strength" unknown to others. For not merely did he reject the proposals; in a strangely elated manner he cried openly to the officers "You cannot be without me—you will fall to ruin if I do not sustain you." He spoke with vigour against the exemption from pardon of certain of his friends saying that he repented nothing so much as Strafford's death and would not sin in like manner again. But Berkeley argued that the excepted persons could be maintained with royal pensions abroad and he and Ashburnham continued to visit Cromwell frequently and to work for a better understanding. Charles relented and when Parliament proposed to him again the terms submitted at Newcastle, he decided in preference for the Army's proposals. But it was too late. Cromwell was weary of delay, disgusted with Charles' shifts, and doubtful of his sincerity. He felt the force of opinion in the Army against the King was too strong for him to oppose it, and many who wished to get rid of Charles Stuart had been strengthened in their position by his curt words against the proposals. The Agitators talked openly of his deposition, the word assassination was not lacking. Cromwell began to wish heartily that Charles was away from Hampton Court. He wrote to him stating that it might be necessary for his own safety to keep him a closer prisoner. Other anonymous letters informing the King of plots against his life were allowed to reach him. Whalley, as has been seen, removed the guard.

Years later, the poet Marvell wrote of Cromwell:

> "And Hampton shows what part
> He had of wiser art
> Where twining subtle fears with hope
> He wove a net of such a scope
> That Charles himself might chase
> To Carisbrook's narrow case."

The wretched King, weary of the fool's paradise in

which he had been living proved an easy victim. His own friends' entreaties were added to his enemies' insinuations. Ashburnham and Legge urged him to flee. At length, finding the prospect of a closer confinement "intolerable" he decided, as he put it in his letter of explanation, "to give way to his feelings and to withdraw himself for some time from the eyes of his friends and enemies alike." The real danger he was in was proved by the anger of the extremists when his flight was known, which verged on open mutiny. Charles' mistake lay in his treatment of the moderate element in the Army in July, not in his action now. Cromwell's motives remain a mystery. He had probably no more use for Charles, but he certainly did not want him murdered. The flight recommended itself to him most probably as a practical expedient rather than a subtle net.

The night of Thursday, November 10th, was dark and stormy, and Charles retired at five o'clock to write his letters as was his usual custom on three days of the week. He pleaded indisposition and asked not to be disturbed. Whalley did nothing till eight, and then entered the King's chamber. He found his cloak in a heap on the floor and certain letters on the table. One to himself provided for the disposal of the King's pictures and household goods. Another to Parliament explained Charles' motives for flight.

The King had slipped down to the river by an unguarded postern gate. On the other side he was met at Ditton by his three friends, Ashburnham, Legge and Berkeley. Together they pushed through the night towards the coast. Their goal was Jersey. Thence they could cross to France. The King gave no sign of his thoughts. Were they of the Queen and liberty? Or was his mind still full of politics and intrigues—how to trick the Army; how far to concede essentials; what use could be made of Scotland? Through the cold

night they galloped, and the thoughts of a King and the fond hopes of a man jostled through his brain in time with the horse's hoofs. Henrietta! Day came and the sight of the sea. Freedom was at hand: "Where is the ship?" asked Charles. "There is no ship," Ashburnham answered. Charles looked at him with questioning eyes. He mumbled some excuse. He had never thought to provide a ship. Charles said nothing; it were unkind to reproach a friend, but, wearied after a long ride, his head swam for a moment, and the vision of Henrietta grew hazy and faded from his sight. Escape was not easy after all. Afterwards, Berkeley and Ashburnham each told their own story, and it never was clear what exactly had happened. Some, noting that after the King's death, Ashburnham compounded at an easy rate "and lived at ease and grew rich for many years together without interruption," cast aspersions on his loyalty. But those who knew him best never doubted his good faith, though they might question his ability. The plans for escape were never well concerted, nor the goal clear, or it may have been that some plan had been evolved between Cromwell and Ashburnham to which the latter agreed, as he thought, for the King's good. They had been very friendly. Charles would have time later to think about it. Now something must be done.

There was a hurried consultation between the fugitives as they walked their horses down the hill. Folk were beginning to glance at them curiously; they must decide quickly where to go. The Isle of Wight was suggested. There were many boats sailing thither and the governor, Hammond, was a nephew of one of Charles' chaplains. He would surely be loyal. One of them doubted it; the other reasserted the probability. Charles quietly interposed. He would go with Legge to Titchfield where the Countess of Southampton would give him shelter. The other two should cross to the

Isle of Wight and sound the governor. Ashburnham agreed and made for the quay. Berkeley turned back to urge the King if they did not return to get away to France as best he could.

Hammond was on horseback when he met the two emissaries, and trembled so much when he heard their story, that he had to dismount. He was an honest kindly man, but he was a soldier entrusted with command by Cromwell. "You have ruined me," he cried uncertain what to do. A confused discussion followed. Still hesitant, the governor accompanied the two to Titchfield, where the King awaited them. Why they brought him there, revealing Charles' whereabouts before Hammond had committed himself to help their projects must ever remain a mystery. Probably they lost their heads. Ashburnham, who took the lead, was reviled by Berkeley afterwards and defended himself by the plea that he considered that Hammond's word had been given. When they came to the house Ashburnham went up and told the King that the governor was with them and waited below. Charles saw at once that he had been trapped. "Oh, Jack! thou hast undone me!" he cried in an agony of disappointment. His words revealed to Ashburnham what he had done. He begged Charles to let him kill Hammond. What was one man's life, for the sake of a cause in which so many men had died. But Charles—and all honour be to him for the choice—seeing on one side liberty, and on the other renewed captivity and probable death, did not hesitate. He restrained his friend: no man should be killed that he might go free. "It is too late now to think of anything but going through the way you have forced upon me and to leave the issue to God." The King went down to Hammond. Ashburnham turned aside and wept.

"I do no way believe he was unfaithful to me," Charles said once to Herbert, though it was plain he

disliked speaking on the matter. The King considered, however, that by not yielding himself as a hostage to Hammond on their first meeting and thus giving Charles a chance to escape, Ashburnham "wanted courage at that time whom I never knew wanted it before." For the moment, however, their lot did not seem to have fallen out unpleasantly.

A warm welcome waited Charles in the Isle of Wight. The islanders even taxed themselves to provide him with luxuries. "A gentlewoman as his Majesty passed through Newport presented him with a damask rose which grew in her garden at that cold season of the year." Hammond refused to give up the King's friends when Parliament sent for them, and allowed Charles to hunt and ride abroad in the island. A time, however, had come for a decision on political matters and at the end of December the King took the action which completed the breach with Cromwell, and made inevitable his own eventual ruin. As soon as he reached Carisbrooke he had submitted to Parliament extremely conciliatory proposals, based on the continuance of the Presbyterian system for three years, and the surrender of the militia for his own life. He could not be expected to go farther, and he had reason to be indignant at the way his offer was received. For nine days it was ignored, and then it was ordained that four of the Newcastle propositions dealing with the control of the militia and safeguarding the continued existence of the Parliaments, *should be transformed into bills and submitted to* Charles for his assent. Only after agreeing to them should he be allowed to come to London to treat personally with the Parliament. It was not a generous reply, and Charles sent Berkeley to London to get in touch with Cromwell, and to engage his help. But Berkeley found that the atmosphere had entirely changed. Cromwell would not see him, declaring that it was too dangerous, and that he could not be expected to perish

for the King's sake. The Army leaders, temporarily reconciled with Parliament, had supported the four bills, and Cromwell himself, suspicious of the King's sincerity, had decided that his restoration was undesirable. It was said later that he had intercepted some correspondence with Henrietta, in which Charles had suggested that once he regained power he would not be bound by concessions made under durance. It is possible that Charles may have soothed the Queen in some such way, but if such ideas entered his head, they were not consonant with his general attitude to the negotiations, in which his loyalty to principles and his scruples about betraying his friends remained firm however crooked his methods or uncertain his judgments.

Unable to consent to the four bills which would have bound his successor over the question of the militia, and deserted by the Army chiefs, Charles turned again in his extremity to his own countrymen. The Scots had never been happy about the transaction at Newcastle, and the presence in Scotland of the Duke of Hamilton had stirred the Royalist cause to life again. Now at last, Hamilton had his chance of achieving that union between Presbyterians and Royalists in Scotland which had failed so disastrously at the time of the Incident. Adversity had ennobled the duke, for this time he was ready not merely to intrigue but to fight for his idea. Scottish commissioners came to London to treat with the King, before his flight from Hampton Court. They now appeared at Carisbrooke, and it was probably his knowledge of their friendly intercourse with Charles that completed the alienation of Cromwell from the King. The charge of insincerity is, on the surface, unanswerable, since in September Charles had expressed a readiness to accept the Heads of the Proposals, in November had appealed to the Army chiefs for help, and then in December signed an agreement, undertaking

among other things to crush out the sects in England. Nor did he face the grave responsibility he was undertaking in renewing bloodshed. Four years of war had sickened the country of death and brutality; by inspiring the second civil war Charles made himself in the eyes of many a "man of blood, worthy himself of death." To these charges there is but one answer. It was Charles' duty, as he conceived it, to negotiate with any who would enable him to take up again the task of ruling the country which he inherited by divine right, and to come to terms with whichever section of the community would help him best without demanding the surrender of his fundamental principles in the government of Church and state. On the other hand, the four years of war had done nothing to solve the problems which occasioned it. At the end as at the beginning the Royalist and Puritan faiths remained, not mere political creeds, but two entirely different ways of looking at life, in an age when men's deep sincerity and their burning religious passions made compromise impossible. Since the end of the war, two years of talking, combined with a genuine will to peace, had accomplished nothing. It was natural that the King should listen with sympathy to the Scottish proposals. His utmost concessions had been ignored at Westminster, he now offered the same religious settlement to the Scots, and they agreed to support his demand for a personal treaty with the English Parliament and the disbanding of the Army. If this were refused, a Scottish army was to enter England "to settle a lasting peace" if necessary by force.

The Engagement between Charles and the Scots was signed at Carisbrooke on December 26th, on lead tablets which they buried in the gardens of the castle till it was safe to unearth them. Two days later, he refused his assent to the four bills. Parliament thereupon passed a resolution that no further addresses should be

made to Charles. It remained to be seen whether Scotland could save him. He turned to her always in moments of despair, in 1641, in 1646 and now. Each time he had found his hopes disappointed, but his inherent feeling for his native land was too deeply rooted for logic or common sense to move it. He ignored the fact that an invasion of Scots would destroy more surely than anything else the reaction in his favour that had been growing during the previous year throughout the country and particularly in London. He did not realize he must appear guilty of duplicity. Something had to be done to cut the Gordian knot. Charles tried force again in permitting the renewal of war. His enemies tried force in the execution of Charles. Both failed and many bitter years had to pass before the English genius for practical compromise triumphed in 1660, and a new philosophy of moderation evolved in 1688. But the younger generation of these latter years, though they achieved much lacked something which had made their fathers great; a jubilant faith and a passionate conviction of their duty to God and man.

. . . . .

The immediate effect upon Charles of his refusal of the four bills was the increased severity of his captivity. Hitherto it would have been easy to escape, as Berkeley frequently urged, but Charles was no coward and would not run away from his responsibilities, when negotiations were pending. Now, his friends were ordered to leave the island, and he himself was confined to two rooms in the castle with two persons only to wait on him. A guard was set, and changed every three months by Fairfax's instructions. The castle was staffed by specially approved people, and the King found himself in very truth a prisoner. Hammond, however, did his best for him. He ordered the barbican to be made into a bowling-green, and had a pretty summer-house built

beside it. Here, in preference to his narrow chambers, the King spent most of his time, enjoying the wide expanse of sea that lay below him, playing bowls or reading. He had a catalogue of his books in which he took great pride, for he possessed volumes not only in Greek and Latin but also in French, Spanish, and Italian, all of which he spoke fluently. But he read most from the Bible, or from one or other of his many books on theology, with occasional excursions, in less serious moods, into Spenser's *Faerie Queene*. Every day he was punctual in his prayers and hours of meditation, and he devoted much time to writing. Many of his letters and philosophical disquisitions were addressed to his son. As his own hopes dwindled he thought increasingly of the high-spirited lad who might one day retrieve his father's fortune. "It is some kind of deceiving fortune and lessening the injury of my long restraint," he wrote to him, "when I find my leisure and solitude have produced something worthy of myself and useful to you." "The true glory of princes consist in advancing God's glory in the maintenance of true Religion and the Church's good. Also in the dispensation of civil power with justice and honour to the public peace." Thus he instructed him in his theories of kingship and yet again stressed the two ideas for which he was standing firm, the preservation of the established religion, and the defence of the laws, which was turning "the reproach of his sufferings into the honour of a kind of martyrdome. . . . The troublers of my kingdoms have nothing else to object against me but this: that I prefer Religion and Laws established before those alterations they propounded."

He wrote verses also, vigorous rhymes that had little in common with the stilted lispings of the court-poets.

Groping towards the consoling thought that his sufferings made him the champion of his people's

liberties, as he had never been in his time of power, he wrote :—

"Imprison me ye Traytors! Must I be
Your fetter'd slave whilst you're at liberty,
T'usurpe my scepter and to make my power
Gnaw its own bowels and itself devour?

Subjects can have no safety but their graves,
When slaves doe sway and sovereigns are slaves.
True hearts I pitty still whose sufferings,
And Remedies are twisted with the Kings.

Plot do your worst; I safely shall deride
In my crown'd soule your base inferior pride,
And stand unmoved, though all your plagues you bring,
I'll die a Martyr, or I'll live a King."

Another forceful rhyme begins :—

"Great Monarch of ye world, whence power springs,
The potency and power of Kings
Record the Royal woe my suffering sings.

Nature and Law by Thy divine decree
The only root of righteous royalty
With this dim diadem invested me.

Tyranny bears ye Title of taxation,
Revenge and robbery are reformation,
Oppression gains the name of sequestration.

Churchmen are chain'd and schismatics are freed,
Mechanics preach and Holy Fathers bleed,
The Crown is crucified with the creed.

Augment my patience, nullifie my hate
Preserve my issue and inspire my Mate
Yet, though I perish bless this Church and State."

Thus, in his bare chamber or in the solitude of the summer-house, he poured out on paper the emotions that he hid from those about him.

He felt his loneliness keenly, no less than such material hardships as a frequent lack of clean linen. He said

afterwards that the best companion he had for three months was the old man who made his fires. Did they talk philosophy or gardening, or merely pass the time of day with a mutual respect for each other's reserve? The King's only other companions were his two dogs, whom he was allowed to have with him, Rogue, his spaniel, and Gipsy his favourite greyhound. They were a great comfort to him.

As the months passed either Hammond grew careless, or Charles' gentle patience increased the governor's pity. Natives of the island were allowed to slip in to the barbican, there to be touched by Charles for the King's evil. Correspondence was smuggled to and fro. Charles succeeded in sending a letter to Princess Elizabeth, greatly to her joy, and in April word reached him that his second son, York, had escaped. It was about this time that he derived much pleasure from friendly disputes with a student-chaplain, attending upon Hammond. He was a young man who "could argue pretty well," and Charles who was never at a loss in theological argument "made merry" over the talks.

One day they were arguing in the hall, Mr. Troughton the young man standing opposite the King between a lieutenant of Foot "earnestly hearkening with drawn sword" and a strange gentleman. But the stranger was known to Charles, he recognized him as one who had fought for him in the wars. Suddenly, he seized the lieutenant's sword "which made the officer look strangely and affrighted the disputant." But Charles did not meditate violence. The stranger slowly grasping his meaning, knelt down and the King knighted him as Sir John Duncomb. It was a gesture of joy at the sight of a friend.

Before long the King had evidence that another friend was present. A certain Henry Firebrace, who had been one of Charles' attendants, had come down to the Isle of Wight and obtained employment at Carisbrooke.

Thereafter he found means to help the King in many ways, mainly in the passing of correspondence. There was a soldier who waited at dinner " in a white-cap " whose looks the King liked and he became an intermediary. But Firebrace was intent on getting into direct communication with the King. He ingratiated himself with Hammond, till he could come and go freely among the soldiers. Each of the two rooms occupied by the King had a door at which a guard was set. That leading from the bedchamber opened on to the back-stairs, and few people passed to and fro. Firebrace offered to relieve the guard at this door while he was at supper and the soldier agreed. The rest was easy. Pushing the door ajar, Firebrace whispered that he was a friend. Charles answered quietly. Next night, Firebrace made a slit through which he could speak without opening the door, and concealed it with the hangings. Then, in short whispers, they planned the King's escape. There was a narrow window to his room. He had put his head through and was sure he could manage to force his body through it. Firebrace agreed on a certain night to have two confederates in waiting below the castle wall with horses and a " lusty boat " near at hand. He would then creep below the window and toss up some pebbles to warn the King, who would then climb through and descend with the aid of a cord which Firebrace slipped in to him as they talked. Firebrace would let him down with a rope over the castle wall to the two friends waiting below. The simplicity of the plan was the best augury of its success. The night came and all was in readiness. Firebrace tossed the pebbles against the King's window and waited. All was still. Then a low groan broke the silence. The window was too narrow, and Charles had tried in vain, " sticking fast between his breast and shoulders." Firebrace in great distress guessed what had happened, but could not reach him to help. A few moments later,

the light of a candle in the King's window, showed that Charles had managed to force himself back into his chamber and wished to signal his attempt had failed. Firebrace could do nothing but warn his friends below by dropping stones over the wall where he had hoped to drop the King. Later he sent for files in the hope of smuggling them to Charles, and trying once again, but something had roused Hammond's suspicions and Firebrace was forced to leave the island. Soon after his friends made other attempts, equally unsuccessful. One conspirator suggested that his servant should appear in the guardroom in a countryman's disguise seeking to be touched for the evil. A twin disguise should be smuggled into the King. He could then pass in safety through the soldiers who would take him for the same countryman they had seen before. Charles accepted the idea but refused to wear a false beard. The plan, however, was never executed, and in September the King's stay at Carisbrooke came unexpectedly to an end.

Charles' restlessness, and his efforts to escape had been inspired partly by news from without. War had broken out again. As a result of the Engagement, Hamilton and his Scotsmen had invaded the north of England, and Holland had stirred up the Kentish Royalists who had been too much under the eye of London to fight effectively in the first civil war. But there was no co-operation between the two risings and while Fairfax crushed the Kentish men, Cromwell marched north and defeated the Scots in Lancashire. By September all was over. Hamilton and Holland were both taken prisoners, and died on the scaffold soon after their royal master, atoning thus for much luke-warm loyalty in earlier years. But the fighting had been bitter, and Cromwell and his men returned with the conviction that Charles had been guilty of deliberately renewing bloodshed, and that there could be no true peace till he was dead. Cromwell's hostility to the King had grown

steadily after the flight to Carisbrooke, since when he had refused to have further parleys with Charles. Some said the King's friends had plotted to murder him, and this discovery was the cause of Cromwell's change of temper, but it was neither in Cromwell's nature to be disturbed by such plots, nor in the King's to dabble in murder. Rather, it was the conviction that Charles could not steer a straight course which drove Cromwell to the decision that his restoration to the throne was impossible. In that case there could be no security while he was alive. Thus, from practical considerations he was forced to make common cause with the Republicans, and agree that Charles should stand his trial. The second civil war confirmed him in this belief, not merely because he counted the King responsible but because God had spoken through the battle, and the Army's success had proved the righteousness of its cause.

Once convinced, Cromwell did not shrink from action. He was not disturbed by minor questions of constitutional precedent, or legality. What must be done, should be done. "Let us all be not careful what men will make of these actings. They, will they nill they, shall fulfil the good pleasure of God, and we shall serve our generations. Our rest we expect elsewhere, that will be durable." In this faith, he went straight on, when all around him men were hesitating. He returned with his Army to London, to find that Parliament, as weary of war as they, had gone back on its determination not to negotiate further with Charles. Three commissioners had been sent down to Carisbrooke, and Parliament had agreed to treat personally with him at Newport, whither representatives were sent, headed by Northumberland and Pembroke. "Great rejoicings there was on all hands for this Convention, and fair hopes appeared, that God would vouchsafe to give his Blessing to it."

Charles prayed devoutly for success. "Let the truth

of Thy spirit so clearly shine in our minds that, all private ends laid aside, we may . . . pursue the publick good." From his heart he added, "Let not the guilt of our sins cause this treaty to break off."

The Parliamentary commissioners arrived at Newport on September 18th, 1648, and thither Charles was brought, full of joy and hope. It was wonderful to be in the world again after nine months solitary confinement, and to have about him his own friends and servants, the faithful Herbert, Philip Warwick, the able secretary, and Richmond, his dear cousin. Nor were his opponents hostile to him. Remembering Holmby and Sion House, he faced Pembroke and Northumberland with friendly courtesy. The debates each day were conducted with "great sobriety and moderation." The terms proposed to the King were the three years maintenance of Presbyterianism and the surrender of the militia for twenty years. They were no easier than those incorporated in the four bills, but Charles was eager for peace, and was ready to agree. But he argued single-handed every point that arose, so that the Earl of Salisbury exclaimed, "The King is wonderfully improved." "He was always thus," replied Warwick, "but too late your lordship discerned it." One day he overdid himself, debating the point of who began the war. Warwick urged Northumberland to spare him but the earl, his conscience as tender as the King's, vowed that he dared not, their own case was so desperate if the King were right. Each night at eight, Charles dictated a despatch to Warwick. On one occasion he was worn out. "I wish I had consulted nobody but my own self," he muttered, looking back over the weary years, "for then, where in honour or conscience could not have complied I could have early been positive." And as he spoke the tears ran down his cheeks.

For two months and more he made this last gallant fight for peace, contesting the points at issue through

the day, and dictating and reading far into the night. He was tired out. But neither he nor Parliament had changed their views and they were still in essence irreconcilable. Eventually, after numerous concessions, he refused to agree to the exemption of a large number of his friends from pardon. On this rock the discussions foundered, and, as he saw his last hope of safety slipping away, he felt that to a small extent he was redeeming the sin he had committed on that May morning of fear when Strafford's fate was sealed.

His own end was near. The Army had lost all patience with Parliament's dilatoriness. On November 16th, the Army determined that "the capital and grand author of our troubles, the person of the King may be speedily brought to justice for the treason blood and mischief he is therein guilty of . . .". On November 29th, at Newport, Firebrace who had returned and was acting as a page of the bedchamber, noticed various soldiers prying about with pistols in the royal quarters. He was sufficiently alarmed to warn the King. Charles commented that Hammond was on leave and that his deputies, over diligent, might have increased the guard. As night fell, however, it was clear that something was amiss; Charles was lodging with Richmond, and at every door and window guards were set, pressing so close at the entrance of the King's own bedchamber that he was almost suffocated with the smoke of their matches. Richmond and Lindsey, another Scots nobleman, sent a certain Colonel Cooke to find out what he could, and he returned an hour later, alarmed and urgent. The place was full of rumours that the King was to be seized. The noblemen urged Charles to flee before it was too late. It could be done. Cooke knew the password and had passed through the guards unmolested. He could guide the King, easily disguised in the darkness of a wet night. There were horses and a boat in readiness. Charles stood by the window, and Richmond

and Lindsey pressed him to consent. He looked across at Cooke who was drying himself by the fire "What do you advise?" The soldier hesitated, then admitted flight would be easy. There was a moment's silence. Then the King spoke; "They have promised me, and I have promised them, and I will not break first." Further argument failed to move him. He had given his parole when he came to Newport not to attempt escape; he would not break his word, however great the personal danger. Richmond was in waiting and Charles sent the other two to bed. The duke came out to them, and the three friends whispered anxiously together. Richmond would make a last attempt to persuade the King; the others would lie down in their clothes, in case they were disturbed. Richmond came back a few minutes later. The King had gone to bed, nothing more could be done.

Morning came, the duke hastened breakfast. But almost immediately there was a summons on the door. Troops waited without. The officer, Colonel Cobbit, refusing to show his order, bade the King accompany him. Charles could not resist. His coach was at the door amid a throng of excited bystanders. "Never at one time 'tis thought was beheld more grief in men's faces or greater fear in their hearts, the King being in such a manner hurried away they knew not whither." Charles was told he could take two servants with him and asked for Herbert to be sent for, if he were sufficiently recovered from an ague from which he had been suffering. He and another got in the coach with the King, at Charles' request, and one of the officers was about to climb in too. But there was a flash of royal anger. "It is not come to that yet. Get you out," he said to the intruder who "with some shame" mounted his horse. So the sad procession drove away. Richmond was allowed to go with it, for two miles. Then he was ordered to return. "His Majesty who at other times was cheerful

at his parting from his friends shew'd sorrow in his heart by the sadness of his countenance." He did not see Richmond again.

His captors took him to Hurst Castle, a lonely spot on the sandy spit of land that runs out beyond the Solent, a dreary place where Charles could only walk along the shingle and everything smelt of sea-weed, where candles were needed in the gloomy rooms at noon-day, and the governor, with black bushy beard and huge sword, seemed, like his castle, to come from the land of ogres. But to Charles it was a fitting setting for his last struggle with despair. Gradually, he relinquished his hope of life and won through to that calm of mind, that aloofness from little things, which would enable him to enact worthily the last short scene of his life. He walked each day over the loose stones "with patience and serenity and more alacrity" than his followers, and for the last time enjoyed earthly things as he watched the ships of all sizes that passed daily under sail.

There were times when his peace of mind was threatened. One of his servants was dismissed for incautious words; only Herbert remained. One night, they heard the drawbridge fall at midnight and armed men ride into the castle. Next day, at the King's order, Herbert inquired who it might be, and was able to tell Charles that he gathered it was a certain Major Harrison. Charles said nothing and went to his prayers, but when an hour later Herbert came in he saw that the King had been weeping. Charles confessed that an anonymous letter had once warned him he was to be assassinated by Major Harrison. He had never seen the man, but he admitted he had been discomposed. Harrison left, however, and Charles was informed of his business; it was to order the King's removal to Windsor. The news pleased Charles, for he did not know what occasioned the order; how on December 6th Colonel Pride had purged

Parliament of all "dissentients" who opposed the Army's will. The Presbyterian majority of nearly 150 members had been expelled; eighty Independents remained. This minority was now considering the disposal of the King's person, and he was to be brought to London for his trial.

On December 17th, Charles came to Windsor, by way of Winchester and Farnham. Near the latter town he passed a company of horse behind an officer "gallantly mounted and armed," in a new buff coat and a crimson fringed sash. He saluted the King, who acknowledged the salute with pleasure, and passing on inquired the officer's name. It was Major Harrison, "He looked like a soldier," Charles commented, "having some judgment in faces, if I had observed him so well before, I should not have harboured that ill opinion of him." That night at Farnham he spoke with Harrison and told him of his former suspicions, but he found the Major somewhat "affected," and did not recognize the threat behind Harrison's admission that in the cause of justice he would be no respecter of persons. Charles broke off the conversation and went to supper "being all the time very pleasant."

At Windsor, the King had a meeting with Hamilton who was also a prisoner. "My dear Master," was all the Scot could murmur, remembering a hundred acts of kindness. "I have been so indeed to you," Charles answered softly as they embraced and parted.

Here Charles spent Christmas, insisting that proper state should be maintained, donning his best clothes and reading the service of the day. It was now that word came of a final overture from the Army. Even now Cromwell hesitated to support those who wished to kill the King. But he never grasped that Charles' refusal of his terms was based on principle. On this occasion, Charles would not see the envoy. Not without a struggle, he dismissed this last-minute chance of

escape. He shut himself up for half a day and then appeared saying "that he had conceded too much, and even so had failed to give satisfaction, and he was resolved to die rather than lay any further burden on his conscience."

Herbert watched him with loving solicitude, and fills his memoirs with stories of this last week, lingering over them as if to put off the inevitable end. There was an occasion when the King's diamond seal was lost and after a day's vain search, "a little before his Majesty went to bed, a good charcoal fire burning in the Chamber and wax lights burning, the King cast his eye to one end of the room and saw something sparkle." Another night, Herbert's pallet bed in the outer room caught fire, and he rushed shouting in to the King, but the mattress was pushed up the chimney and no harm done. One morning, Herbert overslept, and was summoned to his master's room by the tinkling of his silver bell. But the King only smiled at his remissness and promised him a gold alarm clock, bidding him write to the Earl of Pembroke on the matter. Charles himself had a silver clock, which with his gold watch, the bell and a wax-lamp, were placed each night beside his bed with characteristic formality. He derived some small comfort in these last days, in the formal observances of royalty. When he was removed in January to St. James', he was permitted for a fortnight to maintain his state at meal times. His dishes were brought up covered, "the Say was given," and the cup was presented on the knee. Then word came that all this must end. Charles henceforth ate in private. He had ceased to be a King.

News was brought to him that he was to stand his trial. "He retired into his bed-chamber and was a good while private in his addresses to God." He was conducted to Whitehall, and as he passed, the soldiers struck at those who uncovered before him. So he returned to the palace he had loved.

CHAPTER XII

THE REGICIDES[1]

"What subject can give sentence on his King?
And who sits here that is not Richard's subject?
And shall the figure of God's majesty
His captain, steward, deputy elect,
Anointed, crowned, planted many years,
Be judg'd by subject and inferior breath. . . ."
—Bishop of Carlisle,
Richard II, Act iv, Sc. i.

ON Saturday, January 20th, 1648–9, King Charles I appeared before the High Court of Justice, set up by the soi-disant Commons of England, and sitting in the Great Hall of Westminster. Of the one hundred and fifty commissioners appointed, between sixty and seventy attended the meetings of the Court and gave their consent to its sentence, so that the King was condemned by the minority of a body, appointed by the minority of a House of Commons which, even before it was purged, had lost through Royalist abstention nearly half of the members originally elected nine years earlier. No justification of the trial can therefore be put forward from the legal point of view; the only possible line of justification lay in the argument that it was a grim act of necessity. The Regicides were brave men, ambitious and brutalized by war, but acting, as they thought, for the welfare of the state. They proved to be grievously mistaken, for the Commonwealth was doomed at its beginning by the living legend of a martyred King.

"No earthly power can justly call me in question as a delinquent," the King declared. Even the Great

[1]Acknowledgment must be given to the use made in this chapter, of Muddiman's *Trial of Charles I.*

Charter, to which his opponents had once appealed so eagerly, gainsaid it, for how could one "without peer" be tried by his equals. His judges claimed that their authority was derived from the people of England. "You never asked the question of the tenth man in the Kingdom," was Charles' answer.

With a sense of fitness which had sometimes failed him in lesser crises, when his judgment had been clouded by the persuasions of friends or the dictates of policy, Charles refused to plead before such a tribunal. He deliberately put aside the opportunity of explaining to his people his theories of kingship, the principles to which he had endeavoured to be loyal, and his passionate love for his Church. It was a great opportunity and it must have cost something to let it go.

He must not think of self, and when he spoke must defend not his own life but the liberties and safety of his subjects, any one of whom might suffer like himself, if law were set aside, and life and property were at the disposal of an arbitrary and usurped authority. Thus he would die a martyr not only for his Church but for the laws and liberties of his land. And the people of England who had applauded Eliot would as surely honour him.

The President of the Court was Bradshaw, a Lancashire man who would not shirk the grimmest task. He had no desire to be unfair to Charles in the actual process of trial, and the judges met two or three times beforehand to consider their procedure. So far as possible, all was to be done in a seemly manner.

The King was brought to Whitehall, where he slept in his own bedchamber. On Saturday, January 20th, he came to Westminster. In the great hall which had witnessed so many fights for life and liberty, he was seated on a velvet chair, facing his accusers. He did not remove his hat, but scanned the faces of his judges, recognizing no more than eight. Strangers ruled the

land he had called his own. The place was crowded with onlookers. Perhaps he thought of Strafford's trial and the eagerness with which he himself had watched.

The roll was called, and as they read the name of Sir Thomas Fairfax, a voice cried from the balcony, "He has too much wit to be here." It was the soldier's high-spirited wife: the Court glowered, but Charles' heart warmed at the hint of a friendly audience. Then the charge was read by the solicitor-general, Cook, and the King, with an instinctive action of command, put out his cane as if to stay proceedings and touched the solicitor's sleeve. Cook ignored him and read on, and the knob of the cane rolled off on to the floor. Charles waited for someone to pick it up; then realized his isolation. He bent and recovered the knob. It was an ill omen! He pulled himself together, and listened to the charge. The King, so said the accusation, had overthrown his country's "rights and liberties, out of a wicked design to erect and uphold in himself an unlimited and tyrannical power to rule according to his will." He had "traitorously and maliciously levied war" against the Parliament and people. Charles listened, his eyes wandering over the Court and round the galleries. Ill at ease, he sat, then rose "and turned about to behold the guards and spectators," then sat again, looking very sternly and with a countenance not at all moved. Then the words "Charles Stuart to be a tyrant and traitor" struck on his ear. He laughed in the face of the Court. The memory of his honest efforts to rule well in the months after Buckingham's death, when only hard work could solace his silent grief, the memory of his innumerable concessions and of the six months of heart-burnings and hesitation at York, these and a hundred other memories made him eager to up and pour out to these people and the world a denial of the charges so glibly made against him. But he kept silence. A woman in the gallery cried out that only

traitors and rebels were accusing him. The soldiers used her brutally, and Charles turned away. He must not let himself be moved; he must fulfil his task.

The Lord President was speaking. "You have now heard your charge. The Court expects your answer."

In quiet and restrained language Charles put his point of view.

"I would know by what power I am called hither; I was not long ago in the Isle of Wight . . . there I entered into a treaty with both Houses of Parliament, with as much public faith as it is possible to be had of any people of the world. I treated there with a number of honourable lords and gentlemen and treated honestly and uprightly; I cannot say but they did very nobly with me, we were upon the conclusion of the Treaty. Now I would know by what authority, I mean lawful —there are many unlawful authorities in the world, thieves and robbers by the highways—but I would know by what authority I was brought from thence, and when I know . . . I shall answer. Remember I am your King, your lawful King . . . think well upon it— —I say think well upon it before you go further from one sin to a greater, therefore let me know by what lawful authority I am seated here, and I shall not be unwilling to answer. In the meantime I shall not betray my trust; I have a trust committed to me by God, by old and lawful descent. I will not betray it. . . ."

The Lord President replied that Charles was constrained to answer by the authority of the Commons of England in the name of the people of England by whom he was elected King.

"England was never an elective Kingdom," Charles answered. "It had been a hereditary kingship for near these thousand years." Then he returned from this dangerous byway to the essential point. "I do stand more for the liberty of my people than any here

that come to be my pretended judge." He spoke slowly but clearly, without any of his usual hesitation. In vain Bradshaw ordered him to reply to the charge. He was unmovable.

"Let me see a legal authority warranted by the word of God, the scriptures, or warranted by the Constitutions of the Kingdom, and I will answer. If you do it by an usurped authority you cannot answer. There is a God in heaven that will call you and all that give you power to account. Satisfy me in that and I will answer, otherwise I betray my trust and the liberties of the People."

The Lord President could do no more. He adjourned the Court till Monday.

"I am not afraid of this business," the King declared, as the President ordered him to be led away. The soldiers cried "Justice" as he passed, but once at least, a whispered "God bless him," mingled with their curses.

The King spent the night at Cotton House. Two soldiers were stationed in his bedchamber. Charles refused to go to bed in their presence, for he had never let any but the proper officers visit him in his bedroom, and his sense of decency was offended. So he stayed up all night. Next day was Sunday and the most fiery of the Roundhead preachers, Hugh Peters, was sent to minister to him. Charles let no anger creep into his voice, but he refused to hear him. He heard the mob outside surging to Westminster perhaps in the hope of a glimpse of their King, and meditated on the fickleness of crowds. Herbert hovered about him, eager for a chance of doing something for him, but the King said little and wanted less. There was little left to be done for him on earth.

On Monday morning, the twenty-second, the trial continued. The Solicitor-General moved that "the prisoner may be directed to make a positive answer . . . which if he shall refuse to do . . . the Court may proceed

according to justice." Bradshaw categorically demanded from the King a denial or a confession of the charges brought against him.

Charles answered boldly: "If power without law may make laws, may alter the fundamental laws of the Kingdom, I do not know what subject he is in England that can be sure of his life or anything that he calls his own." For his people's sake, therefore, he could not plead, and he was beginning to give his reasons in full when Bradshaw, who was losing his patience, interrupted. He was not to dispute the authority of the Court; he was to give a punctual and direct answer to the charge.

But Charles had summoned to his aid every ounce of Stuart stubbornness that he possessed. The argument degenerated into a wrangle; the clerk of the Court read a formal demand for an answer; Charles reiterated "I will answer the same so soon as I know by what authority you do this," and there was a stormy passage of words.

The King: "I do require that I may give in my Reasons why I do not answer, and give me time for that."

The Lord President: "Sir, it is not for Prisoners to require."

The King: "Prisoners! Sir, I am not an ordinary prisoner."

The Lord President: "The Court hath considered of their jurisdiction, and they have already affirmed their jurisdiction; if you will not answer we shall give order to record your default."

The King: "You never heard my Reasons yet. . . ."

The Lord President: "Sir, your Reasons are not to be heard against the highest jurisdiction."

The King: "Show me that jurisdiction where reason is not to be heard. . . ."

"Serjeant, take away the prisoner," cried Bradshaw angrily at last.

"Well, sir," muttered Charles, "Remember that the King is not at liberty to give in his reasons for the liberty and freedom of all his subjects."

"No answer will be given to the charge," the Lord President concluded as Charles was led away. A soldier spat in the King's face as he went out of court. Charles wiped his face with his handkerchief and spoke quietly to the man. "Well, sir, God hath justice in store both for you and me." He was too tired to be angry.

On Tuesday it happened as on Monday. Again the Solicitor-General demanded "that speedy judgment be pronounced against the prisoner at the Bar." Bradshaw again asked "Guilty or not guilty," and after a little pause, Charles asked: "When I was here yesterday I did desire to speak for the liberty of the people of England. I was interrupted; I desire to know yet whether I may speak freely or not." Determined though he was not to plead, he wished his attitude to be clear that all his subjects might know he was standing for the law against usurpers; for constitutionalism against tyranny. But the last satisfaction of explaining himself more fully was to be denied him. His accusers dared not let him speak.

Had the King wished to defend his conception of majesty, or his religious faith, it would only have inflamed the hatred against him. They were anxious for him to answer to the charge and justify themselves by proving that no treaty could satisfy, when the King's whole outlook on state affairs differed so fundamentally from those of Independents and Presbyterians alike. But this new cry of the people's liberties, this portrayal of their own usurpation of power, this defence of the sovereignty of law; this was dangerous. So the King could not be allowed to speak.

"Clerk, do your duty," ordered Bradshaw.

"Duty, sir!" echoed Charles. "I say again to you," he went on, "so that I might give satisfaction to the

people of England of the clearness of my proceeding . . . to satisfy them that I have done nothing against that trust that has been committed to me, I would do it, but to acknowledge a new court against their privileges, to alter the fundamental laws of the Kingdom—Sir, you must excuse me."

"Clerk, record the default," concluded the Lord President.

The next three days were spent by the Court in sifting evidence and examining witnesses in the Painted Chamber, in a last vain effort to justify to themselves and posterity the course upon which they had decided. The death-sentence was resolved upon, and on Saturday the twenty-seventh, Charles was again summoned to the Bar to hear his doom. As Bradshaw left home that morning, his wife fell on her knees, and clasping his feet bid him desist, and not risk his own safety for the sake of some vague dream of the future! Bradshaw did not hesitate. "I confess he will do me no harm, nor will I do him any, but what the law demands." He bade his wife rise and went out to do the deed that would one day cost him his life.

The court was crowded. A sense of dread expectancy pervaded it. The King came in quietly; he stood by his chair with every eye fixed upon him. In his black suit, with only the cane in his hand, he looked very lonely, yet every inch a King. From balconies and alcoves, even from the entrance-court where now the officers had to strike the soldiers before they would cry for justice, a wave of sympathy seemed to be spreading towards him, so that he felt that if he could only speak he might reach to the heart of his people at last. His eyes fell on the distant door that led to St. Stephen's Chapel. If he could only speak to the Lords and Commons of England, and through them to the country! If only the Court would delay in giving judgment. "I shall desire a word to be heard a little," he began as

soon as he was in his place, but Bradshaw interrupted : " You may answer in your time ; hear the Court first."

" Shall I be heard before the judgment be given ? " Charles asked anxiously, but Bradshaw was speaking, turning his back on the King and addressing the Court. As he began to reiterate the crimes charged against the prisoner " in the name of the people of England," the same shrill voice cried from the balcony as on the first morning of the trial, " It is a lie—not half or a quarter of them."

" What drab is that that disturbs the Court ? " shouted an angry officer and threatened to shoot, but Lady Fairfax had already withdrawn.

But there was another who was restless, and he was not among the spectators. John Downes, a member of the Court, fidgeted in his seat, raised his hand to his face, crossed one leg and then another, till Cromwell leant across and told him to be still. The King, when asked if he had anything to say in his defence, put in a plea to address the Lords and Commons in the Painted Chamber.

" I do conjure you as you love that which you pretend ; I hope it is real, the liberty of the subject, the peace of the kingdom, that you will grant me the hearing before any sentence is passed."

Bradshaw hesitated. Downes jumped up. Here at least was a chance of delay. Anything—anything to put off the dread moment when the words of the sentence should fall from the President's lips. He moved an adjournment to consider Charles' suggestion. The Court withdrew for half an hour. But away from the influence of that quiet kingly figure, the judges rallied themselves and Downes, unable to find a seconder to his motion to grant the King's request, left the place in tears.

The Court returned to the Hall. Bradshaw coldly informed Charles that they had been too much delayed by him already and would proceed to judgment. For a

moment the King's calmness wavered. The opportunity of speech with the Lords and Commons of England seemed every moment a more precious chance, if not of escape, at least of justification.

"Sir, I think it would have been for the Kingdom's peace . . . it is not my person that I look on alone, it is the Kingdom's welfare and the Kingdom's peace; it is an old sentence, 'That we should think long, before we resolve on great matters' . . ." He continued to expostulate but Bradshaw coldly interrupted, "Sir, you have been already answered."

"I do require you as you will answer it at the dreadful day of judgment that you will consider it once again," Charles said.

But the Lord President replied, "Sir, I have received the direction of the Court," and proceeded to the sentence. He made a lengthy speech, full of precedents and legal maxims, full of illustrations from Rome and Lacedemon and mediaeval Britain, rating Charles for his attempt to subvert the fundamental laws of the land, and declaring him responsible for the bloodshed of the war.

Charles listened without flinching, but at the end he could not forbear to ask for "one word before sentence," to deny such "heavy imputations." But the Lord President reminded him that he had disavowed the Court, and commanded the sentence to be read.

The clerk pronounced the charge, recorded the King's refusal to answer and concluded, "For all which treasons and crimes this Court doth adjudge that the said Charles Stuart, as a tyrant, traitor, murderer and a public enemy, shall be put to death by the severing his head from his body."

There was a hush on the place. The Court stood up to give its assent.

"Will you hear me a word, sir," asked the King quietly.

"Sir, you are not to be heard after the sentence," replied the President.

"No, sir?" exclaimed Charles.

"No, sir, by your favour, sir. Guard, withdraw your prisoner."

Charles' control all but gave way. As the guard approached he cried out, "I may speak after the sentence—by your favour, sir, I may speak after the sentence ever. By your favour (hold!) the sentence, sir—I say, sir, do——"

"Guard, withdraw your prisoner."

The King recovered himself. The people's liberties. He was a martyr for them. The thought soothed him. He turned quietly to go. "I am not suffered for to speak. Expect what Justice other people will have." With these last words he left his judges, while the soldiers relieved from the strain, laughed and jeered below him, and the crowd thronged round the sedan chair which was to bear him to Cotton's house and thence to Whitehall. The men who carried the chair bared their heads instinctively till the soldiers prodded them with their pikes and bade them cover.

News of what had happened spread like lightning through the countryside. It came to Hamilton and Holland in their prisons, and foreshadowed their own fate; it came to Northumberland and his sister, Lucy, and made them search their own consciences and say their prayers, the one with a sense of guilt, the one with thankfulness that all through these weary years of war he had honestly and uprightly striven for peace. It came to the young Duke of Richmond, now back in London, so that he hurried to Whitehall only to be told that the King had refused to see any, so anxious was he to meet death with a spirit freed from earthly ties. It came to Scotland, whence "commissioners hastened to urge in vain that the sense of their parliament must be taken," though no more notice was given to them

than to the Dutch ambassadors and the French prince who came to expostulate. It came to the Queen in France and to the young Prince of Wales who cared nothing for shadowy principles when his heart-strings were torn and who was loyal to the core to those who belonged to him. He took a sheet of blank paper and signed his name at its foot, then sent it post-haste to Parliament that any conditions they wished might be entered thereon as the price of his father's life. But the judges tossed the blank sheet aside, to lie unfilled from that day to this, a testimony to a boy's impetuous love.

At Whitehall, Charles spent his time with Bishop Juxon, who did not leave him till late on Sunday night. This good friend, whose single-mindedness and holiness of heart had survived his immersion in the affairs of state, had come quickly to the King, and being man as well as priest had uttered on entrance some words of condolement. But Charles answered him kindly but firmly, " Leave off this, my Lord, we have not time for it. Let us think of our great work and prepare to meet that great God to whom ere long I am to give an account of myself."

While Juxon helped him to make his peace with God, the faithful Herbert was doing what he could to ease his last hours on earth. The soldiers were persuaded to leave the bedchamber, and Herbert dragged his pallet-bed of straw into the King's room and slept beside his master. The scaffold was in course of erection outside Whitehall and on Monday the King was taken to St. James' to spend his last day and night untroubled by the noise of hammering. At peace with himself, he was able now to attend for a brief while to earthly things. On the Saturday evening he had given Herbert his emerald ring and bid him take it to his laundress " Lady Wheeler in Channel Row." Obtaining the pass-word from a friendly soldier, Herbert performed

his mission. The lady took him into a parlour, and returned a minute later with a sealed cabinet, which Herbert took back to the King. It contained some jewels of state and other rare trinkets. "You see," said Charles, "all the wealth now in my power to give to my children." He also sent Herbert to Pembroke for the gold alarm-clock, ordered at Windsor, but it had gone astray in delivery. Herbert marvelled at the King's calmness in attending to such little matters.

On Monday he arranged his few small legacies. The Prince of Wales was to have his Bible, and James, a sundial of silver, a curious relic that the King had always prized. For Elizabeth and Henry there were the jewels and his books. There remained the two watches that stood always by his bedside. Charles' thoughts flew back over the years, to his old friend Buckingham, and the adventure in Spain and the letters from home, with their tales of prattling, dancing Moll. Surely the gold watch must go to Moll, for she and Richmond had not been fair-weather friends. They stood for the memory of the gallant band at Oxford.

As for the Queen he would send her his dogs. After her dear self and their children he doubted if he loved anyone more than he loved the faithful Gypsy, and that rascal Rogue. And no one would miss him more! There they lay by the fire, sniffing restlessly as if they sensed something amiss. It did not do to think too much of them. He took a sheet of paper and began instead to make an anagram from "Carolus Rex." Herbert found him happy as a child; for the letters had formed "Cras ero lux." It was a good omen!

That afternoon Elizabeth and Henry were brought to say good-bye. The little princess was nearly overcome, but she remembered her royal breed and looked her father bravely in the face while he gave her many and difficult messages. They were to forgive his enemies and not to attempt revenge; she was to tell York to

obey his brother as King, she was to read Hooker and Laud, she was to tell the Queen, her mother, that his thoughts had never strayed from her. "Sweetheart, you'll forget this," the King broke off remembering her tender years.

"No, I shall never forget it while I live," Princess Elizabeth replied.

Henry was only nine, and Charles tried not to weigh him down with a sense of tragedy. He took the boy on his knee. "Sweetheart, you must not be King so long as your brothers Charles and James do live," he told him solemnly.

"I will be torn in pieces first," cried the child with unexpected vigour, and Charles smiled. He said good-bye to them, and their courage failed them. They broke down in tears. "Their distress so affected the King's feelings that he lost control of his legs and this was so persistent that after he had given them his blessing, he was compelled to take to his bed to recover his strength." Soon after the Prince Palatine called but Juxon sent him away, realizing that Charles could not stand much more.

Night came, and Herbert and his master lay down for the last time together. For some four hours Charles slept soundly, but Herbert on his pallet bed tossed and turned, and in the small hours fell into uneasy slumber. And he dreamed. He thought he heard a knocking at the door, and when he opened it, Archbishop Laud walked in. The King greeted him and they went to the window and talked awhile together. The King was pensive and Laud gave a deep sigh. Then, withdrawing, he made so deep obeisance that he stumbled and fell, and Herbert going to his aid was awakened by the King, who said he wished to rise, and asked his servant what disturbed him. Herbert told his dream, and Charles recalling his old friend's high-handed ways smiled sadly:

"But he is dead," he sighed. "Yet had we conferred together—'tis very likely (albeit I loved him well), I should have said something to him might have occasioned his sigh." But Laud, and Strafford, Buckingham and Falkland, all were dead, and to-day he would join them.

It wanted yet two hours till day, but Charles could not sleep again. "I will get up, having a great work to do this day," he said. He urged Herbert to brush his hair well and make him as trim as might be, for it was a second marriage-day to him. Before night, he hoped to be espoused to his Lord Jesus Christ. The morning was cold and he put on an extra shirt that he might not shiver and folk think him afraid. "For I fear not death," he said quietly. "Death is not terrible to me. I bless my God, I am prepared." Juxon came and read to him the twenty-seventh chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel. Charles thought it a special choice, but when the Bishop told him it was the lesson for the day, the appropriate words seemed to him a blessing on the occasion. He continued in prayer until Colonel Hacker knocked on his chamber door. It was time to go to Whitehall. The King said he would come presently, and, after a few moments in private, took Juxon cheerfully by the hand with the words "Come, let us go." He bade Herbert take with him the silver bedside clock that had been the companion of all their journeyings, and taking it from him when they were without, he gave it back to him to keep in memory of his master. Then, without faltering, the King set out on his last walk from St. James' to Whitehall. Troops lined the path along which he went; the drums rolled, and the uproar was great. Charles walked quickly and did not look back, so he did not see the unhappy Rogue creep out after him and try to follow, till a "mean-faced fellow" who had been annoying Charles by pressing close upon him, turned aside, and captured the wretched dog.

It was a bright morning, and the park looked lovely

in the thin winter sunshine. They passed Prince Henry's tree and for a moment thoughts of his childhood and of that other walk when he went to take up his kingship flashed through the King's mind. He pointed out the tree to the officer beside him. Then he resolutely turned his thoughts from earthly things.

At Whitehall he refused the importunities of five Independent ministers who wished to pray with him. "Tell them plainly that they who have so often and so causelessly prayed against me shall never pray with me in this agony. They may, if they please, and I'll thank them for it, pray for me." It was a last flash of the old spirit. But he put out of his mind all uncharitableness, and opened his heart to receive holy sacrament. As he partook of the Communion, he found new strength to face his final ordeal, and thoughts of politics were erased for ever from his mind.

He wished to eat nothing afterwards, but the fear that he might grow faint for lack of food, persuaded him to taste a manchet of bread and drink a glass of claret. Then, with Juxon beside him, he passed out from a window of the Banqueting Hall on to the scaffold in Whitehall.

The common hangman had refused to execute the King, and two men, disguised in beards and periwigs and butcher's smocks, awaited their victim. The scaffold was swathed in black and iron chains were at hand, in case Charles struggled. The soldier in charge had refused to sign the order of execution but Cromwell, dubbing him a froward, peevish fellow, had signed it himself even as he had bullied his fellow-judges to put their names to the death-warrant. What must be done, should be done. In the city the shops were open as usual and all was quiet. But a crowd had gathered below the scaffold, their looks, for the most part, " devoid of joy or sorrow." When the King appeared, a tremor of pity could be felt for " his beard was long and grey, his

hair white and he was greatly aged." He spoke quietly to the small group about him on the scaffold, breaking off to adjure one whose cloak had touched the axe, to be careful not to hurt it. Again, later, he cried "mind the axe." Buried in him was a great fear; not of dying but lest he should show himself afraid. Suppose the axe were blunt, suppose the headsman had to strike and strike again, as had happened, so they said, when his grandmother died at Fotheringay. Then he would scream—disgrace himself—perish horribly! Who knows what fears, what terrors had tormented him in lonely moments in the last few weeks. But never were they expressed, even to himself. He had himself rigidly under control, though his anxious eye strayed ever to the sharp edge of the axe. He was pathetically anxious to die, as he had lived, with decorum. He spoke briefly. His enemies, he said, would never prosper till they gave their due to God, the King and the people, restoring to the latter "those laws by which their life and their goods may be most their own. I need not have come here," he added, "I am the martyr of the people."

He clung to this thought as he turned to face his executioners. He heard the quiet voice of Juxon, full of tender solicitude. "This stage is turbulent and troublesome," the good bishop was saying, "it is a short one. But you may consider, it will soon carry you from earth to heaven."

"I go from a corruptible to an incorruptible crown," the King answered, "where no disturbance can be, no disturbance in the world." His thoughts flashed back over the course of his troubled life. Now at last he could rest. It would be good. But with the thought of earthly things came the memory of his dear ones. For a moment the crown of martyrdom and the solace of his faith failed to comfort him. The cold horror of realization threatened

him. He would never see his wife again. He would never see his children again, never touch them or hear them, or know what they were doing. Never again! He must not think. He pressed into Juxon's hands the cane that he had borne throughout the trial. He had no other keepsake for one who had never changed, the same quiet friend in triumph or disaster. Then, taking off his George, which he had instructed the bishop to send to the Prince of Wales, he gave it to him with the one word "Remember." The word, ringing out through the hush of the expectant moment, seemed to his listeners to be charged with deep significance. Poignant with tragedy, it has echoed down the centuries.

It only remained to die. He called for his lace nightcap and carefully arranged his hair beneath it. He bade the headsman wait for a sign before he struck. He would thrust out his hands when he was ready. "I shall say but very short prayers," he added, as he knelt beside the block, carefully looking first to see that it was secure. The headsman made a movement. "Stay for a sign!" Charles cried anxiously. Nothing must go wrong now. For the honour of a King, he must receive death in kingly fashion. He prayed in silence, wrapping his soul for the last time in the noble comfort of the liturgy he loved. He thrust out his hands. The axe fell. There was no mistake. The head was severed clean and true. As the executioner held it up in silence, a low groan came from the heart of the crowd. It was over. Troopers rode out and dispersed the mob. There was no resistance. Folk went gladly to the safety of their own firesides, and the comfort of homely things.

A week later, they buried Charles at Windsor. Juxon officiated, Richmond was chief mourner, and Herbert stood at hand. Priest, friend, and servant, they were doing for the King the last offices that could be done on



CHARLES ON THE WAY TO THE SCAFFOLD

(After Wappers)

earth. The sky was still clear as they brought out the coffin but clouds blew up and snow began to fall. By the time they reached the chapel, the pall was white. Then they recalled how, at his coronation, Charles had worn a cloak of white, and folk had called it an ill omen. Now they whispered that white was the colour of innocency. With heavy hearts but faith undimmed they laid the White King to rest.

EPILOGUE

IN a dusty room of the secretary's office of Whitehall, a clerk was writing at his desk. About him books and manuscripts lay scattered; despatches from the King of Sweden, the reports of spies, memoranda on the shipping in the Downs. But the secretary's thoughts were not on his work. They had wandered to a garden in Yorkshire, where in younger days he had tutored the daughter of Sir Thomas Fairfax, and written poetry when the fancy took him. He thought with affection of his old master, of his grief at King Charles' death, of the inexorable drift of events which had made Cromwell Lord Protector. He was a great man this Cromwell—an iron-souled man—how triumphantly he had overridden fortune!

Andrew Marvell the secretary took up his pen idly. Here indeed was a subject for poetry. He forgot the despatches. His quill began to move with purposeful rapidity. He would write an ode to the Lord Protector.

An hour passed. Then the door of his room opened. John Thurloe came in, the Secretary of State and Cromwell's right-hand man.

"Ah, you write poetry, when you should serve the Commonwealth," he said, not unkindly, as he took up the half-finished verses. "Whom do you hymn?"

"His Highness, by your leave, sir," answered Marvell, abashed.

EPILOGUE

"Poetry is a fickle jade," commented Thurloe, when he had finished reading. "'Tis the Stuart King who has triumphed in your verse." And he pointed to the lines :

> "He nothing common did, or mean
> Upon that memorable scene.
> But with his keener eye
> The axe's edge did try;
> Nor called the gods with vulgar spite
> To vindicate his helpless right,
> But bowed his comely head
> Down, as upon a bed."

Marvell sighed. "'Tis true. One can kill the body, but not the spirit. God knows what the end will be!" And the two men turned to the business of the day. Come well, come ill, the work of the state must be carried on.

On the other side of the palace stood Inigo Jones' banqueting-hall, Charles' delight in the days gone by. Across its shining floor the dear homely lady who was Cromwell's wife walked to the window to look down at the teeming life below. Suddenly she shivered. A strange sadness had shaken her. It almost seemed as she turned, that there slipped out of her sight a small slim figure with closely curling head, whose laughter-laden broken English changed of a sudden to the tears of a frightened woman. And across the window another ghost seemed to pass, a man whose eyes were haunted with the memory of a friend betrayed, whose lovely hands in anxious eagerness seemed to feel for the support of a tried counsellor. Elizabeth Cromwell shook herself free of fancies. Oliver would soon be coming from council. He was tired out these days. She must be at hand to cheer him with idle chatter, or with a reading from the Bible. She did not care much for Whitehall.

So the evening came, and darkness fell upon the palace. The Protector, praying for the blessing of a good night, lay down to rest, and slept the sleep of an honest man who has worked to the utmost of his strength and knowledge. No ghost haunted his pillow; he had done his best. But the palace took no heed of him. In its still beauty, it dreamt of other days—of a glory that had gone, of a King who had loved it well. And throughout the length and breadth of England, others dreamt and waited and remembered. The Charles Stuart of their dreams was a man purified and transfigured, not the over-anxious man who had wavered to destruction, but the King he would have been, had he been truly master of his soul. By his steadfast death he had portrayed the best in him, and thinking of that death, men turned to his son overseas. So it came to pass that, in the fulness of time, the English people of their own free will restored the Church and Crown for which Charles and his Cavaliers had died. Side by side, there persisted the two conflicting ideals of freedom of thought and of loyal service, inspiring with faith and courage generations of Englishmen yet unborn.

Durga Sah Municipal Library,

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